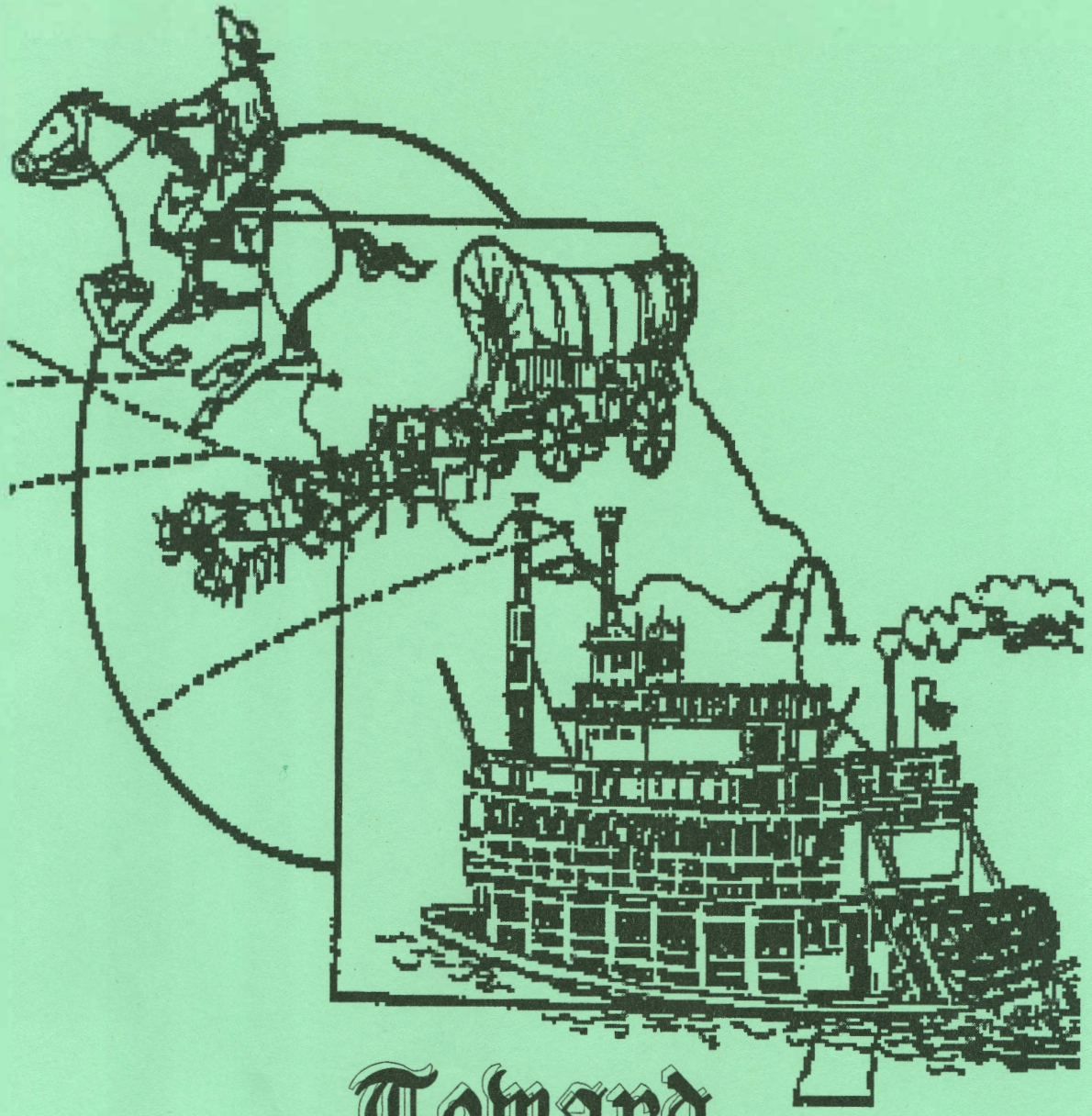

Toward The Setting Sun

2nd Series, Vol. 1, No. 2 Spring, 2003

TOWARD THE SETTING SUN

The Historical Journal of the Missouri Conference

The United Methodist Church

Second Series

Volume 1, Number 2 *Spring, 2003*

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Introduction

We often hear that history is so "boring," that it's "that old, dry stuff, that happened a long time ago." This issue of *Toward the Setting Sun* reminds us that history also happens in our own lifetimes – and that we are a part of shaping history. Or, as my children said to me, "Of course, history is easy for you, Dad. You lived most of it."

In the case of the shared partnership between the Missouri Conference(s) and the Mozambique Conference, that statement is literally true. We've lived, not most of it, but all of it. Sometimes we weren't aware of what was happening, but it was all within our lifetimes. I first became aware of our relationship with Mozambique as more than a "mission project" in the summer of 1991. I was part of the national youth ministry staff, and we were holding our international youth event, called "Youth '91," at the University of Missouri, Columbia. The first morning, as people were arriving and registering, I was standing on an outside balcony at the Hearnes Center, when I saw Larry Williams coming across the parking lot. I hailed him, and he immediately came up to me with a request. There were three youth from Mozambique coming to the event and he was translating for them. (The European language of Mozambique is Portugese, which not too many U.S. youth speak.) He wanted to know if they could sit in on the Bible study group I was leading every day, since he didn't think it would bother me if there were a low voice coming from the back of the room as he translated for them. After that, I became more involved with Mozambique, to the extent that my wife and I partner with a church. And we helped raise the funds to send three youth from our church with the Bishop's Choir in 2002.

So this issue of *Toward the Setting Sun* is a "theme" issue, about Mozambique and our partnership with the church there. Larry Williams kicks off the issue, with a review of how our involvement began and grew. Carol. Kreamer, who is General Board of Global Ministries staff assigned to the Mozambique Initiative, reflects on the breadth and depth of the partnership as it continues to evolve and draw the churches of Missouri and Mozambique closer together. Bishop Ann Shearer's article reminds us that mission and partnership is not a one-way street. She reflects on the ways that the church in Mozambique gives to the church in Missouri and enriches our common life. Finally, the three youth who were in the Bishop's Choir from Liberty United Methodist Church reflect on that trip and what it meant to their lives. It is fascinating to see how all the ways in which Bishop Sherer says the partnership with Mozambique has enriched the church in Missouri are reflected in how these youth say their lives were changed and enriched by their experience in Mozambique!

In "Historical Notes of Interest," we list a range of significant dates for Missouri United Methodism. These dates are "founding events," which we will be celebrating in the years ahead. Beginning in 2004, we move into a series of bicentennial celebrations of "firsts" for Methodism in Missouri.

Future issues are in the planning stage. This fall, we will do another "theme" issue, this one on Jacob Lanius, one of the towering figures from "circuit rider days." Cleo Kottwitz, who many people in Missouri think *is* Jacob Lanius, will share with us the script for his presentation of Jacob's life. In addition, we will include a selection of letters written *to* Lanius (he didn't make copies of the letters he wrote), with some editorial comments on how the letters reflect major issues and events of his day. At least one special issue in 2004 will be on Central Methodist College and its predecessors. A number of faculty and students at the college are preparing papers for this issue. The year 2004 marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of Central College and *Toward the Setting Sun* will be helping share in the celebrations of that event.

If you would like to suggest (or write) an article for this journal, see "If You'd Like to Write for *Toward the Setting Sun,* at the end of this issue.

Our deep appreciation goes to Joy Dodson, John Finney and others on the staff of the library at Central Methodist College, who handle subscriptions, print the journal, and mail it to all of you.

John O. Gooch,
Editor

The Missouri-Mozambique Conferences Covenant: The First Decade, 1988-1997

By Larry A. Williams

The first mention of Mozambique in a Missouri East Conference Journal appears on page 103 of the 1988 Journal, where the Second Consent Calendar report during the morning session of Thursday, May 26, includes the listing "#20-ConferenceRelationship w/ Mozambique" as one of 13 petitions adopted in the normal course of business of this annual conference session. That single petition set the course for the covenant relationship between the Mozambique and the Missouri East Conferences, and eventually the entire Missouri Area, which has blossomed, grown, and evolved into one of the most exciting stories of collaborative partnership in missions and mutual ministry within United Methodism today.

What follows is not a comprehensive or exhaustive accounting of the first decade of the covenant between the Mozambique Conference and the Missouri East Conference. Rather, it is an attempt to document key stages in the process, to identify important elements that have nurtured the relationship, to set the context for what has taken place, and to offer some analysis of developments along the way. It will touch on the involvement of churches and individuals in the Missouri West Conference such that the covenant lives on in 2003 between the newly merged Missouri Conference and the two emerging Mozambique Conferences, North and South.

Work Leading to Formation of the Covenant

The Missouri-Mozambique story began several years before this brief, almost passing reference to Mozambique noted above. Early in the 1984-88 quadrennium, the newly constituted Conference Board of Global Ministries (CBGM), under the leadership of Pauline Niles, sought ways for congregations in the Missouri East Conference to learn about ministries and missions of the United Methodist Church taking place in other parts of the globe. Congregations and individuals tended to support missions and ministries close to home where they had direct knowledge or a personal connection to projects or institutions. The CBGM searched for ways to expand the horizon of Missouri United Methodists to include financial and moral/spiritual support of missions in other parts of our nation and the world. In 1987, they introduced the Five-Star Church recognition program as one way to encourage support of a wide variety of missions. Churches that contributed toward missions through Advance Specials in 5 categories (conference,

national, UMCOR, world and missionary support) were awarded the designation of "FIVE-STAR CHURCH."

Yet, even as the Five-Star Church program was being discussed and developed, the CBGM continued asking questions like these:

- How can Missourians respond to scriptural mandates to show mercy, offer compassion, seek justice, preach and teach the gospel throughout our global parish?
- How can Missourians become aware of the good news of mission projects that are touching and improving lives 'overseas' or in another part of the US?
- How can Missourians participate in common ministry that reaches to distant locations?
- How can we share resources yet focus the financial support to make a significant impact rather than spread donations so thin across multiple projects that little can be accomplished?
- How can faithful stewardship be nurtured to support vital and critically needed missions projects?
- How can donors see and know the results of missions work?
- How can missions become personally engaging, personally enlightening, personally uplifting?

In 1985, CBGM asked for assistance from the World Division of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM). The World Division suggested a meeting with a Mission Interpreter for the South Central Jurisdiction. In the following year, Andy Fowler, who was then serving as missionary in residence for the jurisdiction, met with the Missouri East CBGM. He suggested the establishment of a covenant with churches within a country in Africa where there was so much need. Conflicts within countries, strife between countries and natural disasters like drought, famine and cyclones had created and continued to cause much human suffering and dire conditions that made survival tentative for millions. Mr. Fowler said that such covenants between churches in USA and those in another nation were "proving to be a most excellent way of addressing their **mutual** needs." (Journal, 1988, p. 168. Emphasis added, as this concept of mutuality has been a key element of this covenant from its inception.)

About 1986, the CBGM created a task force to explore this idea of a covenant with churches in an African country. That task force was named the African Covenant Committee (ACC). Rev. James Doyle served as its chair. According to one "Whereas" contained the 1988 Petition #20, this group "met with and communicated with several members of the African United Methodist Church leadership. These leaders were in complete agreement that our Churches of Mozambique have the greatest needs and would benefit the most from Conference level covenants of **mutual**

prayer, concern, and support." (Journal, 1988, p. 168. Emphasis added.) The ACC was also informed by reports from other conferences that had sent persons to Mozambique on fact-finding trips. Bishop Roy Sano was one such traveler "who conferred with" the ACC and told them about "the spirit and determination of . . . some 39,000 United Methodists . . . even though there is a protracted civil war and famine (potentially worse than the famine of Ethiopia) that has griped this country of 14 million." (Journal, 1988, p. 168)

Once it was decided that the churches in Mozambique were potential partners in such a covenant, the African Covenant Committee focused their efforts in becoming familiar with Mozambique – the country, its geography, its people, their history. All this set the stage for the drafting and presentation of Petition #20 at the 1998 session of the Missouri East Conference.

The two other references to Mozambique in the 1988 Journal do not adequately describe the work and effort that led to this petition. The CBGM report includes this one sentence under the heading of

> COVENANT WITH MOZAMBIQUE
>
> The task force met, did its learning homework, made plans, and now is presenting a petition to the 1988 Annual Conference for a conference-wide program. (Journal, 1988, p. 230)

The Daily Journal for the afternoon session of Friday, May 27, 1988 includes the following as the last order of business before adjournment of that session at 5:45 p.m.

> Dr. David Flude spoke to the MOZAMBIQUE COVENANT RELATION which is detailed in Petition 20 and also asked for concern for the situation in that part of Africa. (Journal, 1988, p. 113)

Petition #20

The complete text of petition #20 – Subject: "COVENANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MISSOUR EAST CONFERENCE AND OUR SISTER CHURCHES OF THE NATION OF MOZAMBIQUE" can be found on pages 168 and 169 of the 1988 Journal. (Journal, 1988, p. 168) Here is an excerpt of that petition to inform later elaborations in this article:

> WHEREAS: The growth of the Mozambique United Methodist Church, from 21,900 to more than 39,000 in about five years, while in the midst of conflict, can inform us of how we might grow both spiritually and numerically.

WHEREAS: We stand in need of the **mutual** benefit of spiritual growth, that most surely will result as we enter into COVENANT with our Sisters and Brothers of the Mozambique United Methodist Church, and

WHEREAS: Our God who continually makes and keeps COVENANT with us, has both ordained COVENANT as an excellent form of relationship and urges us to do the same. Matt. 29:20.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: That the Missouri East Annual Conference pursue establishment of a COVENANT RELATIONSHIP between our Churches and our Sister Churches of the United Methodist Church of the nation of Mozambique, for a period of at least one quadrennium.

FURTHERMORE: The former CBGM committee referred to in this report and now called "MOZAMBIQUE CHURCH COVENANT RELATIONSHIP COMMITTEE", needing the networking strength of all our Conference, be now composed of a Cabinet appointee, the Conference Council Director, and one additional person from each of our Districts, who shall be selected either by the District Superintendent or elected through the District Council on Ministries, and the present Chairperson (to facilitate the formation work of this committee), (NOTE: This has already been approved by the CBGM) and they shall report to CBGM.

DEFINITION OF OUR COVENANT:

The COVENANT RELATIONSHIP shall be defined as an understanding of a countries [sic] people, culture, tradition, religious life, with particular awareness of Methodism, to surround that country with love and prayer, and with an assurance of an understanding of that countries [sic] situation.

(Journal, 1988, p. 168-169. Emphasis added.)

The petition goes on to list 6 Immediate Goals for this covenant. In summary, they were:

1. To educate United Methodists in Missouri about Mozambique.
2. To assist in the itineration around Missouri of a team of Mozambicans.
3. "To establish, immediately, a PRAYER COVENANT, which will be **mutual**. " (Journal, 1988, p. 169. Emphasis added.)
4. That the Bishops and Lay Leaders of both conferences (Missouri East and Mozambique) confer so as to initiate and shape the covenant for which no protocols exist.
5. To establish guidelines for participation in the covenant by individuals and congregations.

6. To urge the support of mission projects in Mozambique already listed as General Advance Specials. (It is worth noting that 1988 also marked the 40th Anniversary of the Advance Special.)

General Conference Meets in St. Louis in 1988

Between the time that Petition #20 was drafted and distributed in pre-conference packets (early in 1988) and the time when the Missouri East Annual Conference met in Fayette, Missouri (May 25-28, 1988), the General Conference of the United Methodist Church met in St. Louis, Missouri (April 26-May 7, 1988). This was a most fortuitous, Holy Spirit arranged, coincidence that helped shape and solidify the Missouri East and Mozambique Covenant. General Conference brought the delegation from Mozambique to Missouri and enabled these leaders of the church to meet face-to-face and dialogue with leaders and representatives of the Missouri East Conference.

The Resident Bishop of Mozambique, Bishop Almeida Penicela, accompanied by his wife, led this delegation. His daughter, Angela Penicela was one of the lay delegates to General Conference. The other lay delegate from Mozambique was Dr. André Bahule, an obstetrics and gynecology doctor who practices in Maputo. The two clergy delegates were Rev. João Somane Machado, Assistant to the Bishop, and Rev. Alfiado Zunguze, District Superintendent.

Many individuals from Missouri became acquainted with these persons from Mozambique. Any listing of names would be incomplete, but the following were certainly among this group:

Bishop W. T. Handy, Jr. and his wife Ruth,

Rev. Paul Schlapbach, the Conference Council on Ministries Director,

Rev. Louis Johnsen, served as local liaison for Bishop Penicela,

Pauline Niles, Chair of CGBM,

Rev. James Doyle, Chair of the African Covenant Committee that was later renamed the Mozambique Church Covenant Relationship Committee, and

Rev. Larry Williams, who translated/interpreted many of these conversations and meetings, providing a bridge between Portuguese, the official language of Mozambique, and English.

Those in Missouri heard firsthand the situation these persons, their brothers and sisters in the faith, faced everyday in Mozambique due to the war-like conflict that had been going on since before their country's independence from Portugal in 1975. Rev. Zunguze showed the scar on his forehead and the bullet hole in his sweater, the results of two separate occasions when he was attacked by "armed bandits" back in Mozambique. Dr. Bahule shared that the entire country

lacked medicine and medical supplies for even basic first aid, much less surgery or treatment of war wounds and landmine injuries. Electricity was available only in the capital city of Maputo, and then only for brief spurts of at most one hour a day. Clothing was so scarce that persons could be seen wearing loin cloths fashioned out of plastic grocery bags. Millions of persons were living, and dying, in refugee camps crowded around the larger cities. (The Portuguese word for refugee, *dislocalizado*, is literally translated as "dis-located persons.")

And during these same conversations, their faces radiant with joy, they also told about the United Methodist Church in Mozambique whose membership had grown 78% (from 21,900 to 39,000) in the previous 5 years. They shared about parishes that grew too large for their facilities, split into two congregations and then would go on to split again giving birth to another congregation within 1 or 2 years. Their church buildings were meager – sometimes just the shade of a cashew tree, sometimes a structure made of "local materials" like palm fronds attached to upright sticks supporting a thatch roof or an adobe mud covering rocks inserted in a web of woven bamboo. And, at the rare locations where the church was a permanent building constructed with concrete block, it had probably been damaged by the war. They described the ministries and projects of the church as it addressed the spiritual and material needs of Mozambicans.

The possibility of a covenant like that described in Petition 20 was discussed at length and a document was drawn up and signed by both Bishops and representatives from both conferences before the conclusion of General Conference. This document was a re-statement of the spirit and tone of the drafted petition, with emphasis on mutual prayer and learning about each country. (Unfortunately, as this article was being written, no copy of this document was found.) But one key point is worthy of further elaboration at this point of the story.

Mutual Covenant

From the first mention of such a covenant, Bishop Penicela asked, "What can we in Mozambique offer to the church in Missouri?" He went on to articulate that a covenant requires mutuality. He was unwilling to create a one-sided agreement where Mozambique would only be the recipient of charity from Missouri. He wanted to identify ways both conferences could mutually engage in ministry, always building the Kingdom of God, to the benefit of both parties. He was only satisfied when those in Missouri pointed out that Missourians wanted to learn from Mozambicans how to live faith and practice church with the same fervor and in the same spirit occurring in Mozambique. We in the USA may be rich in material resources but we

were poor in spirit (or Spirit). Mozambicans may have lacked material resources, but they were, and are, rich in the Spirit, faith and a community that supports and encourages one another in discipleship.

So it was that mutuality became such a critical component of this covenant relationship. This was the reason that we see the word **mutual** four times in Petition #20. From the onset of this relationship, both conferences have sought ways to be engaged in mutual ministry and have searched for ways to demonstrate our common-unity as one integral church that has expression in two distinct nations with distinct cultures, languages, customs and traditions. We are all disciples of the same Jesus Christ. We are all members of The United Methodist Church who just happen to reside in different locations on God's created globe. We all strive to respond to the same calling to be witnesses and agents of Christ's love and grace to a hurting world. We all support one another and hold one another accountable in love. We all share the resources with which we have been entrusted. We all claim and practice our Wesleyan heritage. We are one in the Spirit.

Later in 1988, Bishop Penicela announced his retirement because of his health. He was a paraplegic due to injuries suffered in an automobile accident in Africa several years earlier. Those injuries, subsequent complications and the state of medical care available to him in Mozambique compromised his ability to continue as Resident Bishop.

That same fall, Rev. João Somane Machado was elected to the episcopacy. At the age of 42, he was the youngest person elected Bishop in the United Methodist Church.

Phases and Evolution of the Covenant

Once the covenant was established between these two conferences, it passed through several phases and evolved into the direct pairing of partner congregations under the auspices of the current Mozambique Initiative. Along the way, this relationship has moved from learning facts about the other's country from books, to praying for one another, to becoming acquainted with one another through personal visits or vicariously through the sharing of someone who made the trip, to shipping goods and supplies over the ocean, to direct church-to-church linkages.

Visits to One Another's Country Begin

Late in 1988, Bishop W. T. Handy, Jr. visited Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe as part of his episcopal travels. His trip to this region took place just a few months after the Missouri West Conference team of mission interpreters made their trip to southern Africa in the

summer of 1988. The minutes of the 1989 Missouri East Annual Conference for the afternoon session of Wednesday, May 24, note during the presentation of the CBGM's report:

> Then Bishop Handy provided the narration for a series of slides of his recent mission trip to Mozambique. Larry Williams brought a word to the conference in Portugese [sic] and Jan Scott told of plans for two trips planned to Mozambique in 1990, one which will be in July. Members of the Mozambique Committee were introduced. Jim Doyle spoke of the history of our conference "Covenant Relationship" with Mozambique and then read Psalm 46 as a special message our Mozambique partners in mission asked him to read to the Missouri East Conference.
>
> (Journal, 1989, p.90)

Bishop Handy's slides included pictures from the area around Maputo, the capital city of Mozambique, Chicuque, where the UMC operates a hospital and Cambine, a UMC mission station that serves as a school and education center including a seminary to train local pastors and a health clinic. He shared his experiences of the dire conditions in Mozambique ravaged by war for so long: rationed electricity with zones of a city having power for only a few hours at a time; the scarcity of food, clean potable water, clothing, housing, consumer goods, medicine and medical supplies; the difficulty, and sometimes impossibility, of travel over roads scarred by landmines, littered by carcasses of bombed and burned vehicles and the threat of ambushes; war-orphaned children; refugee camps with inadequate facilities; and people barely surviving. He told about seeing clocks on the walls at Chicuque Rural Hospital that were stopped. When he inquired why they were not running, he was told they had no batteries to put in them and if any batteries could be found in the nearby town of Maxixe or even in Maputo, the hospital could not afford to buy them.

But, Bishop Handy also told of churches filled to capacity and overflowing, persons standing at windows to hear the sermon and participate in joyous singing. He told of congregations sprouting at every turn and worshipping in the shade of a tree or in someone's back yard. He told of witnessing church members march, sing and dance as they went forward to give their offerings and tithes during worship. He told of being greeted with song, of being showered with bougainvillea petals and of being treated with the most gracious and generous hospitality he had ever encountered in all his travels.

Three persons from Mozambique reciprocated with visits to Missouri between the 1988 and 1989 conference sessions. William and Maria Humbane and Mary Jean Tennant itinerated in the Missouri East Conference in two separate junkets. (Journal, 1989, p. 233) Mr. Humbane was the Mozambique Conference Lay Leader at the time. His wife, Maria, was a leader in the

Sociedade de Mulheres or UMW in Mozambique. Ms. Tennant was a missionary who had served tirelessly in Mozambique for many years. She was back in the US because the GBGM had required her return due to the increasing dangers posed by the conflict in Mozambique. She told how she did so with great reluctance for she loved and was loved by the Mozambican people. She was particularly saddened by the news that Cambine had been abandoned following attacks by RENAMO forces. RENAMO is the acronym for *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* or Mozambican National Resistance, the rebel forces that sought to depose FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* or Liberation Front of Mozambique) that had led the struggle for Mozambican independence from Portugal and controlled the government of the country. These two groups are now the two principal political parties in Mozambique.

When the Humbanes returned home to Mozambique, they carried with them batteries so the clocks could run, "a supply of communion cups, and clerical shirts and collars."(Journal, 1989, p. 233) Some of those clerical shirts were given to the ordinands at the 1989 Mozambique Annual Conference in December. This set the precedence that has been followed since. Every year, around October/November, the Missouri East Conference has provided a clerical shirt for each of the ministry candidates ordained during the Mozambique Annual Conference session in early December. Later the Missouri East Conference "also printed and provided the conference in Mozambique deacon and elder ordination certificates in Portuguese to be given to their ordinands." (Journal, 1996, p. 244)

Bishop Machado visited Missouri again in May, 1990, at the invitation of Bishop Handy. He itinerated in three districts prior to attending the Missouri East Annual Conference on the campus of Central Methodist College (CMC) in Fayette. He spoke to the conference during the CBGM report in the afternoon of Wednesday, May 16.

> Bishop Jaoa [sic] Somane Machado of the Mozambique Area spoke in Portugese [sic] with Larry Williams serving as interpreter. The six persons going to Mozambique in July were introduced and special thanks were given to Ken Green for helping secure and ship a large generator for the Hospital there. Bishop Handy spoke of the need for small generators and a Fax machine and how churches could grow through their giving. In a spontaneous response the following churches from the floor of the conference agreed to give generators . . . . FAX machines . . . and United Methodist Men of the Conference agreed to give up to $500 in Fax supplies."
>
> (Journal, 1990, p. 85)

Persons present in the Field House of CMC were deeply moved by the stories of faith and the terrible suffering of the people of Mozambique caught in the midst of war and its devastation that Bishop Machado shared. Individual pastors and lay persons approached microphones on the floor conference, forming lines, to announce a pledge by their congregation to provide funds for one or more portable generators for the churches in Mozambique. Twenty-seven congregations made pledges. Over $30,000 was received. These funds were used to purchase generators and other supplies that were shipped to Mozambique in a 40-foot container in 1991. Marian Johnson later reported this event with, "Bishop Machado's heart-moving address to the 1990 Session of the Missouri East Annual Conference and the delegate's response to the request for aid, will be remembered by many as 'the day we saw the Spirit move throughout the Conference.'" (Journal, 1991, p. 229)

Study Tour Group of 1990

The first formal delegation of Missouri Area United Methodists to visit Mozambique was the Study Tour Group of 1990. Larry Williams led this team comprised of Pat Penn, the chair of the CBGM; Marian Johnson, the newly named chair of the Mozambique Covenant Relationship Committee; Sara Clardy, president of the Conference UMW; and Bill Frazee, a UM Men's member from the Hannibal-Kirksville District. Rev. Ken Green was scheduled to go as well, but was unable to go due to learning he had detached retina shortly before the trip.

Marian Johnson's report on the Mozambique Covenant Relationship Committee submitted to the 1991 Conference contains the following summary of the trip.

> During their 12 days in Mozambique, the members gained firsthand knowledge, shared their faith and personally delivered the many gifts of clothing and medical supplies donated by the Missouri East Covenant partners. Before leaving, the team presented gifts to several organizations and churches made from donations made by individuals, groups and the offering taken at the 1990 Annual Conference. Since their return, the team has witnessed their experience to over 100 congregations, Sunday School classes, mission committees, etc. all over the conference. Each member is committed to continue this witness. (Journal, 1991, p. 229)

This group left St. Louis Lambert Field on July 16 and returned on August 8. At that time there were no direct flights from the United States to South Africa due to our government's prohibition in protest of South Africa's apartheid regime. The group's travels required connecting to an international flight in Chicago and an overnight stop in Frankfurt, Germany

before proceeding to Johannesburg, South Africa and then on to Maputo, Mozambique. When the group boarded the plane in St. Louis, they saw a man seated at the window in the first row of the first class section that resembled Jesus as depicted in the famous Sallman painting, with beard and long hair. Back in coach the group met the rest of the cast of "Jesus Christ Super-Star" on board. They had just finished their run at the MUNY in St. Louis the night before. By the end of the trip, the Study Tour Group had seen "Jesus" thousands more times in the faces of their brothers and sisters in Mozambique.

The group checked in 11 suitcases with a total weight of 336 kilos or 740 lbs. These were filled with donations of school, office, fax and medical supplies, some medicine like Amoxil, used clothing, toiletries, hand-cranked cassette tape players that did not require batteries or electricity, audio tapes of New Testament in Portuguese (from a group called Hosanna Ministry). In addition to their own carry-on bags, the group also carried a new fax machine, still in its original box, that presented some interesting challenges at the various customs desks along the journey.

On July 19, when the group arrived in Maputo, they were taken directly to the Melanga Parish where they were greeted with joyous singing and escorted into the sanctuary for a service of prayer and thanksgiving for their safe arrival. The Melanga church building had only recently been completed with assistance from the Africa Church Growth & Development Fund. A concrete structure in the shape of an arched A-frame, it was built to seat 1,000. Within one year of its completion the congregation had grown beyond the capacity of the building. Part of the congregation then formed and started up another congregation at a nearby neighborhood. This is common tactic for church planting in Mozambique, using a shoot from another growing church.

The group from Missouri visited Massinga, Inhumbane, Maxixe, Homoine, Malenguela, Sahane, Teles, Mondiano, Batu, Chicuque and Cambine, all located in the Inhumbane Province, before returning to Maputo and touring nearby areas. The trip north required the use of a small charter airplane, because road travel was unsafe at the time. When the pilot of the aircraft was asked how high they were flying, he responded, "About 11,000 feet and just beyond the reach of bullets from the ground." From Maputo, they flew about 90 minutes north to Massinga accompanied by Bishop Machado and an interpreter. This was the first time that Bishop Machado had been able to visit Massinga since he had been elected Bishop two years before. Up until this time, it had not been safe to travel on the ground and the Mozambique Conference did not have sufficient resources to make this kind of trip by air.

The airport at Massinga consisted of a short dirt runway, surrounded by a fence of woven reeds, and a small one-room building. The pilot circled the area three times before making the

approach. He explained that he was watching for signs of normal activity, confirmation that armed combatants were not hiding nearby to ambush the plane. As persons flocked to the airstrip he became confident that it was safe to land. When it was time to depart from Massinga a few hours later, the pilot informed the group that the runway was too short for takeoff with the weight of all 7 travelers. He took three on to Inhumbane and returned in 40 minutes to pick up the remaining four.

The people of Massinga treated the group from Missouri as if they were dignitaries, some on the team even used the word royalty. Church members greeted the group with singing at the airport. They escorted the group to the local government center to meet the District Governor. (A district is a government administrative division of a province, similar to a county in the United States.) The Missourians were presented as if they were ambassadors seeking permission to enter a new land. The group later realized this was not only typical Mozambican protocol, but that the local leaders of United Methodist Church were both honoring their visitors and at the same time displaying them to legitimize the church's presence and work in that region. Perhaps the prestige of the local church would grow in proportion to the distance traveled by their guests. In Mozambican culture a visitor or guest is a blessing worth sharing with everyone in the community. And, it was also a very practical placation of government officials. The FRELIMO government had been nurtured and funded by the communism of the USSR. The government had taken possession of all church property shortly after independence in 1975. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, FRELIMO softened its suspicion of, and antagonism toward, the church and created a cabinet level Bureau for Church Affairs. The church was still tentatively testing and nurturing this new relationship with the state, while the state saw advantages in permitting, and even encouraging, the church in its ministries of charity, education, and health care, leading people toward personal empowerment and self-sufficiency.

Next, the group stopped by the government-run hospital in Massinga. The realities of scarcity due to war were blatantly evident. They had only one doctor, a native of a Central American country, he spoke Spanish, but not Portuguese. His contract with UNICEF was about to expire. The only medical equipment he possessed was a stethoscope. The hospital had been stripped clean of all supplies, even mattresses, by RENAMO forces that passed through the area in May. The RENAMO bandits had freed all the prisoners in the adjacent jail and then forced them to carry the loot. In the three months since the attack, the government had not been able to provide any replacement supplies. Only a few patients were in the hospital. Most people were too fearful of another attack and avoided the hospital. The building had four wards – pediatrics, maternity, adults and tuberculosis. Each room might have held 4-6 patients. An open yard

offered a place where family members stayed and prepared the meals for their patient/relative. But this hospital had no firewood, no food, and no prospects of any shipments arriving, ever.

Finally, the group went to *o sitio da igreja*, the site of church. They were again welcomed with singing by over 100 people who had gathered there. A meal had been prepared for them on open fires, typical of every household "kitchen" in the area. They were ushered into their worship center, a thatched hut, barely 20 by 40 feet, with a hard surface floor made from a mixture of tree sap and mud, spread and tamped over the sandy soil. While they sat at a table with the leaders of the church, members of the UMW, UMM and UMYF groups of the congregation sat on the floor and sang joyously, each group trying to outdo the other. There were formal speeches of greeting and reporting on the work of the church.

The Study Tour Group learned that the pastor and the membership of this church were themselves refugees who had moved out of the bush in hopes of safety in the city. Entire villages and communities would flee the approaching war together. This site had become a gathering point for United Methodists comprised of several UM congregations and even a district superintendent. The 20 x 40 *baraca* or hut mentioned above typically held over 200 persons in worship each Sunday. Then during the week members gathered in homes for Bible study or in small groups called *ramos*. These "branches" meet weekly and function as Wesleyan class meetings, like those in the earliest days of Methodism in England.

This experience of welcome, gracious hospitality, sharing a meal, even when their resources were meager, hearing stories of overflowing worship services and statistics of multiplying disciples was repeated at every stop on the tour. And all along the tour and at every stop, the group also saw the effects of war and heard the stories of the resulting suffering.

Chicuque, Teles and Cambine

After the group was shuttled from Massinga to the airport in the provincial capital, Inhumbane, they made its way to Chicuque Rural Hospital. While the airplane was making the second trip from Massinga to Inhumbane, their interpreter walked into town to locate transportation for the group. He arranged for an ambulance to carry the group from the airport to the ferry dock. The ambulance was typical of all the ambulances in Mozambique at the time, a four-wheel drive Land Rover station wagon with two doors in front and a split out-swinging door at the rear. The interior contained the bench seat across the front for the driver and a passenger, and two 12-inch wide wooden benches resting on the rear wheel wells and running along each

side of the back cargo area. There was a rolled up canvas stretcher that could hold a patient between the two side benches. No other equipment or medical supplies were on board.

The five travelers, plus Bishop Machado and the interpreter, and all their luggage were loaded in the ambulance and carried to the ferry. They then carried their luggage the length of the dock and boarded the double-decked passenger ferry to cross Inhumbane Bay. At the other end of the 15-minute boat ride from Inhumbane to Maxixe, a church member met them with a small Toyota pickup. The luggage was placed in the bed of the truck, then the 7 persons, plus the driver and two other persons got in the cab and on the open bed for the trip from Maxixe to Chicuque. The driver stopped several times to look at one rear tire that was low on air and straining under the load.

All this detail is offered to give the reader some perspective on what the people of Mozambique were dealing with daily. Imagine, however, that 1990 was at a time when things were getting better. War and destruction and lack of everything had been going on since before the country's independence in 1975.

Chicuque Rural Hospital was a remarkable contrast to the hospital in Massinga. Supplies were scarce, but the church connections provided some resources and channels for these. There was a full staff and nearly all of the 167 beds were in use. The buildings were maintained and there was an air of caring and concern. Food was simple but available because of agricultural projects begun at Teles and cooperation with CEMUDRI (*Centro Metodista Unida para Desinvolvimento Rural e Industrial* or the United Methodist Center for Rural and Industrial Development). Two missionaries from USA were stationed at Chicuque in 1990, Carolyn Belshe, who served as the hospital administrator, and Beth Ferrell, who oversaw the nursing staff and their training. They referred to themselves as "retired grandmothers" who set off on new careers as missionaries.

Teles is located a short drive from Chicuque, 30-45 minutes over ruts and trails in the sandy soil of the area. At one time it was the site of a colony for lepers, somewhat secluded and separate from any other population, yet self-contained with a small stream nearby and fertile soil capable of growing food to support that community. It had been abandoned for quite some time until the UMW in Mozambique began to rehabilitate the remaining building shells to house their Children of the War program. Frequently referred to as the Teles Ophanage, this remarkable program addressed the needs of two groups of war victims. Children whose parents, and sometimes entire family, were killed in war atrocities were brought to this site where women who had lost their husbands, and in some cases children as well, lived and cared for the orphans.

Since the end of the war in 1992, Teles has evolved into a ministry to/with children orphaned and women widowed by AIDS.

By 1990, Cambine was beginning to be re-claimed, repaired and rehabilitated. Tim and Carol Crawford were missionaries stationed there, working on and teaching in agricultural projects and running the first-aid station/clinic on the grounds. The dormitories were not usable at that time and none of the schools were operating then. Very few people had returned to the area and even the large church on the campus was barely used.

On Sunday, July 22, the team worshipped at the Chicuque church. Larry Williams preached in Portuguese which had to be interpreted into Xitswa, the native language used in most United Methodist congregations, particularly in the southern section of the country. Xitswa is one of 13 distinct native languages spoken in Mozambique, in addition to the Portuguese, the official language of the country.

In and around Maputo

On Monday, July 23, the Study Tour Group returned to Maputo and for the rest of the week visited a variety of projects and parishes in and near the capital city where roads where safe for travel. Some of the stops included the CEMUDRI headquarters just north of town, the Christian Council of Mozambique comprised of 17 denominations and the Bible Society, the ecumenical Ricaltla Seminary, the refugee camp at Boane, the churches at Melanga, Betânia, Machava, Matola, Liberdade and Chamanculo. The latter is known as the mother of all the churches in the Maputo area. It was the first congregation in the city that split off many shoots and gave birth to all the other churches around it.

The team also had audiences with the Minister of Health, Leonardo Simão, and the US Ambassador to Mozambique, Melissa Wells. Both of these we very informative and enlightening visits. The team also had the pleasure of dining in the homes of William and Maria Humbane, Bishop Machado and his wife, Nocia, as well as the home of Rev. Jamisse Taimo. Rev. Taimo later became the head of the national election commission of Mozambique.

On Sunday, August 6, individual team members worshipped at one of five churches in the Maputo area. This was their *Ação de Graça* or Thanksgiving Sunday, an annual church celebration of God's gracious bounty. Some Missourians have described *Ação de Graça* Sunday as a 3-4 hour Spirited and joyful worship service in which are combined and included elements of the following events that might occur in Missouri: a Fall Harvest Festival, a Lord's Acre Sale

auction, a stewardship campaign, a country dance, a choral contest and a competition to see which group in the church can raise the most money for the work of the church.

1990 also marked the 100th anniversary of the arrival and presence of Methodism in Mozambique. The United Methodist Church in Mozambique celebrated this Centennial at their Annual Conference session in Chicuque in December. They erected a monument at the drive to the church at Chicuque near the place where the first Methodists arrived in Mozambique in 1890. Their conference theme and motto for that Centennial year was *Cem Anos: Pregando Por Palavras e Obras Sem Parar* or "One Hundred Years: Preaching with words and works without ceasing."

At the 1991 session of the Missouri East Annual Conference, Larry Williams brought greeting from Mozambique and presented special gifts from the United Methodists of Mozambique to our Missouri East United Methodist [sic] including a basket "filled with their love" and a bundle of ten different twigs tied together representing the diversity of the people who are bound together by the love of Christ. Chris Ricks, our Missouri East Lay Leader, accepted the gift and said it would be carried to General and Jurisdictional Conferences. Ken Green reported on the planned shipment to Mozambique. (Journal, 1991, p. 97)

The Mozambican delegation attending the General Conference in 1992 in Louisville, Kentucky, noticed the bundle of twigs that Chris Ricks kept at his table/seat. They remembered the gift they had made nearly two years before and were very touched by this sign of solidarity with the United Methodists in Mozambique.

Belshe visits Missouri

In 1992, "A report on the mission work in Mozambique" was an Order of the Day during the morning session on Thursday, June 11.

> Mrs. Carolyn Belshe, missionary to Mozambique, addressed the Conference and presented a slide show. Mrs. Belshe shared with the Conference concerning the work and need of the Church in Mozambique.
>
> Jessica Hannah presented the Conference Council on Youth Ministries gift to the church in Mozambique, school supplies for the youth of Mozambique.
>
> Larry Williams shared with the Conference on the upcoming mission work camp to Mozambique, an upcoming shipment of supplies (an entire Doctor's office) to Mozambique, and thanks to Jefferson City First U.M.C. in their efforts to build a church structure in Mozambique.

Members of the conference began to make spontaneous pledges for the work in Mozambique from the floor of the Conference: (Journal, 1992, p. 103)

The Conference Minutes go on to list 145 pledges filling nearly two pages with two columns on each page. These pledges totaled over $40,000 for various projects, with receipts exceeding $48,000. (Journal, 1993, p. 266) In addition, $60,000 was pledged for church buildings. The latter was committed by First UMC in Jefferson City, $40,000, and the other $20,000 pledged from the Mission and Church Extension Society of the Jefferson City/Rolla District. These funds eventually were used toward the building of the church in Nacala in the Nampula province. $20,000 of the Jefferson City First UMC went toward the building in Massinga. (Journal 1994, p. 238)

Work Team of 1992

Later that summer (summer in Missouri, winter in Mozambique), five persons went to Mozambique to work at Chicuque Rural Hospital. This team consisted of Larry Williams, Pastor of Salem-in-Ballwin UMC, Winifred Anthes, a retired nurse from St. Louis, Steve Gleghorn, a teacher and farmer/rancher from West Plains, Donna Robinson, a teacher from Festus, and Leroy Schmidt, Christian bookstore owner from Moberly. Leroy is the son-in-law of Bill Frazee, a member of the Study Tour of 1990. Their project involved the renovation of oldest building at the hospital so that it could become a new ward for Special Attention Children, those who needed special, sometimes long-term care, and needed to be separate from those in the Pediatrics Ward with acute and infectious illnesses. The team removed the roof, replaced the termite-ridden rafters and put new zinc roof panels in place.

During this trip, Larry Williams and Steve Gleghorn, were housed in the home of Jeremias and Ilda França on the Chicuque campus. Jeremias was then serving as the Administrator-in-Training of the hospital, under the tutelage of Carolyn Belshe. "In August [1994], Jeremias França, along with his wife Ilda and their four sons, came to the United States to attend school." (Journal, 1995, p. 315) He completed a degree in hospital administration at Southwest Texas University in San Marcos, Texas before returning to become the Administrator of Chicuque Rural Hospital. The Methodists in Sweden, as well as several conferences in the USA funded his studies.

Peace in Mozambique

The day this team left Mozambique, the newspapers in Maputo announced that the warring parties had agreed to a cease-fire and a date for the signing of a peace accord. The Christian Council of Mozambique and The United Methodist Church, particularly in the person of Bishop Machado, were key players in the behind the scenes negotiations that ended the over 17 years of war and brought a lasting peace to Mozambique. Two years later, in 1994, the country would hold its first open and free democratic election.

Missouri West Teams to Mozambique

In the latter part of 1992, a work team from the Missouri West Conference, led by Ann Grayum, went to Chicuque and Cambine. This group witnessed the celebrations in the country as the peace accord was formalized. They also reported seeing the arrival of one of the containers shipped from Missouri. The truck delivering this container was one of the first vehicles that traveled the coastal highway after the peace declaration. As the truck approached Chicuque Rural Hospital, people lined the road and joined in the work of filling in holes in the road so the truck could proceed to its destination. Other groups from the Missouri West Conference followed this team. Persons like Martha Sutherland, Anne Barr and Barbara Vestal returned from Mozambique as strong advocates for the people and the church in that country. Both Ms. Sutherland and Ms. Barr have since returned to Mozambique on several occasions.

Floods in Missouri in 1993

In 1993, flooding along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers devastated much of Missouri. When Mozambican United Methodists learned of this disaster, they joined in prayer for their faith siblings in Missouri. A group at Chicuque composed a song of concern for the people of Missouri. They shared it with a VIM team from another conference in the US, who in turn reported to us in Missouri when they returned home. This event became a powerful symbol that the goal and intent of mutuality was indeed taking hold. Even though the Mozambicans did not have the resources to deliver their well wishes in song directly to their "extended faith family"

in Missouri, they shared them first with God and then with those who could relay the sentiment/message to those in Missouri.

Bishop Sherer and VIM Team in 1995

In January 1995, Bishop Sherer's episcopal travels included Mozambique. Like others before her, she experienced the welcoming hospitality, along with the warmth, generosity and joy of the Mozambicans. She also ached at the lack of basic resources and the suffering caused by landmines, meager health care, a struggling economy, etc. Yet she rejoiced and was renewed by the faith, stewardship, evangelistic zeal, love and grace she witnessed wherever she went in the country. Her experience was even more pronounced by several factors like: Bishop Machado was in the USA for medical treatment, her hosts and guides in his absence had very limited command of English and her own personal struggles at the time. She went to Mozambique exhausted from/by her episcopal responsibilities of the past couple of years, and returned home renewed, re-energized and full of hope for the work of the church in the world.

Bishop Sherer chose to visit Mozambique because of the covenant that existed with the Missouri East Conference when she became the Resident Bishop of the Missouri Area in 1992. Shortly after her arrival in Missouri in the fall of 1992, Larry Williams visited with her to brief her on the covenant, its background and history and to enlist her support for the continuation and enhancement of the relationship. That introduction to Mozambique in her office opened the door for her personal friendship with Bishop Machado and her embrace of the Missouri-Mozambique covenant.

"A Volunteers-in-Mission team worked in and around Chicuque Rural Hospital in August 1995. They did some painting, repairs and electrical work at the teacher's training school in the village of Jerusalem and tested water supplies at Jerusalem, Cambine, Teles and Chicuque. The team consisted of two (2) adults, Leroy Schmidt and Geoffrey Penrod of Moberly, and three (3) youth, Matthew Finnell and Kristy Pieske of Moberly and Dixie Sullenger of Edina." (Journal, 1996, p. 245)

Shipping Containers

From 1989 until 1997, a total of 7 containers filled with assorted goods and supplies were shipped from Missouri to Mozambique. The costs of shipping were paid in most cases by UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). Early in this relationship, this was the only

way to get large quantities of goods for the church and hospital in Mozambique. Conditions were so dire that a use could be found for almost anything collected and sent over. Complex and changing customs rules, however, often created hurdles and delays that complicated the process and greatly increased the total cost of shipping. After 1995, Missouri churches relied on UMCOR's Sager Brown depot in Louisiana to receive, collect, pack and ship any items to Mozambique. Once the war ended and conditions improved and Mozambique's relationship with South Africa warmed, it became more efficient and effective to send funds to Mozambique so the church there could purchase items needed in the open markets in the region.

Missourians also discontinued shipping containers in part because of the difficulty of arranging warehouse and storage space where items could be received, reviewed and sorted, inventoried, packed and stored until there was enough to fill a container. For a time, Salem-in-Ballwin offered such space in their unfinished basement and the parents and Boy Scouts of Troop 783 provided the muscle to carry everything down into the basement, then back up. They deserve great credit and thanks for their contributions in carrying out the packing of 5 containers in the parking lot of Salem-in-Ballwin UMC in the 5 years from 1989 to 1994.

In 1989, Rev. Ken Green was able to secure a large turbine driven generator from the Southwestern Bell Company. He made arrangements to include it and an X-Ray machine arranged by the churches in Mississippi in a container that was sent for Chicuque Hospital. Funding for this container also included contributions from the Missouri United Methodist Foundation, the Ministry of Health of Mozambique and the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. (Journal, 1990, p. 206) In 1991, a 40-foot container was shipped with portable generators as well as medical equipment and supplies and used clothing. In 1992, Elizabeth Gallagher, widow of Dr. L. M. Gallagher in California, Missouri, donated everything in his medical office. She is not United Methodist, but had heard about the need in Mozambique and wanted her husband's equipment and medical supplies in his office to go to a good use. The total value of the contents of this container was estimated to be $276,000. (Journal, 1993, p. 266) "Fifty-eight (58) boxes containing over 14,000 packets of seeds plus over 700 lbs. of bulk seeds were included in the container shipped to Mozambique in September 1993." (Journal 1994, p. 238) In addition, the cargo of this container "included vitamins, medicines, hospital supplies and equipment, 3 X-ray machines, dental chairs and equipment, rolls of fabric for sheets and blankets, 4000 literacy training booklets in Xitswa, used clothing, sewing supplies, school and office supplies and multitude of other items." (Journal, 1994, p. 238) In 1993, a member of Webster Hills UMC, Daryl True, located and donated 4 diesel engines and a huge quantity of cloth in rolls

15 inches in diameter and 8 feet long. In 1994, the Heartland Hospitals in St. Joseph, Missouri were replacing their mattresses. Larry Williams arranged to pick up 165 of them and sent them off with the remainder of cloth that did not fit in the previous container. The last container was shipped out of the Kansas City area in 1997 loaded with medical supplies, an operating microscope for eye surgery, used clothing, a large quantity of student desks and chairs that Saint Paul School of Theology had taken out of service during its renovations, and some PET's (Personal Energy Transportation). The PET project has a longer story that deserves another article.

Missouri East and West Cooperation

Both conferences in Missouri began in 1996 to converse and to cooperate formally so as "to make Mozambique a Missouri Area focus for mission outreach" during the 1996-2000 quadrennium. (Journal, 1997, p. 227) One outcome of this cooperation was the formation of a large VIM work team led by Anne Barr and Martha Sutherland in 1997 to Chicuque and Cambine. This team included Dr. John Ritter and his wife Marcia from Cape Girardeau area, Rev. Larry Williams, Bishop Ann Sherer, as well as Marilyn Hurlbut and Barbara Williams. The latter two women are sisters who had become acquainted with Jeremias França in Texas. They became affectionately referred to as "The Texas Sisters" and have since led several other VIM teams to Mozambique.

This 1997 VIM team was significant in the evolution of the covenant relationship between Mozambique and Missouri for several reasons. First, the team accomplished much and completed many projects.

The team worked at Chicuque Rural Hospital, the Teles Children of the War project and the Cambine campus. Projects included repairing the dam at Cambine, offering a VBS with over 250 children participating each day, painting and organizing a health clinic and pharmacy, painting facilities at all three sites, providing direct patient care at the hospital, beginning the construction of a cistern, teaching English classes for church members and hospital staff, installing radio antennae and apparatus for communication between Chicuque and Cambine. (Journal, 1998, pp. 349-350)

The repair of the dam was particularly important to the rehabilitation and re-population of Cambine. The small dam, barely 10 feet high and 30 feet across, in the path of a meandering creek, had at one time supported much of the activity at Cambine with hydro-power that ran a sawmill and a generator and provided a source of water. The dam had been destroyed during the

war. Its repair was a strong sign and symbol of peace and a return to more normal life in the area.

Second, this team marked the beginning of the engagement and cooperation of several conferences in the effort to support the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. Many conferences and even several autonomous Methodist churches in other nations had been supporting the church in Mozambique individually for a long time. This teams' membership included persons from Arkansas, Texas and Missouri. The links forged during their work have continued to expand the network of people, conferences and congregations who know about and share concern for and information about and support the work of the church in Mozambique.

Third, this VIM trip allowed Bishop Sherer not only to return to Mozambique 2 years after her first visit, but also to travel to Massinga in the Inhumbane province, and Nacala in the northern province of Nampula. That experience set the stage for what is now known as the Mozambique Initiative and the partnerships that support every congregation in Mozambique with both prayer and financial resources from Missouri congregations and individuals.

She and Larry Williams set off from the rest of the group in order to visit these other locations where groups in the Missouri East Conference were supporting the construction of church buildings. News and communication from these locations was difficult. Folks in Missouri were anxious to get status reports on the projects. So they took the opportunity while in Mozambique to make these side trips to these locations to get first hand information to carry back to Missouri. The trip to the Nampula province, and to Malema in particular, sparked Bishop Sherer and Rev. Williams to brainstorm ways that the Missouri Area churches could assist Mozambican churches with material resources while Mozambican churches could assist Missouri churches to experience grace and grow in faith and hope. Conditions in this northern province were even worse than the terrible situations encountered in the southern provinces. Food was so scarce and the congregations so poor that pastors and the district superintendent were receiving no compensation for several months. Children of one pastor showed clear signs of severe malnutrition, perhaps even starvation.

Myriad ideas were generated during the 4-hour ride over the dirt/sand road from Malema to Nampula, and the 2-hour flight back to Maputo and the 18-hour flight back to USA. All the ideas were fueled by the wrenching reality that there were resources available in Missouri. But, how could they be transferred or transported to the remotest of places in Mozambique? How could the root causes be addressed? Could Missouri maintain a steady stream of resources that would have a significant impact? Would an influx of resources from outside Mozambique contribute toward dependency or self-sufficiency? How could the priorities of Mozambicans be

discerned and shared? How could mutuality be honored? What can the infra-structure in Mozambique support?

All these issues and more were brought to the table at a meeting in Columbia, Missouri in the fall of 1997. Bishop Machado was the keynote speaker at the Area-wide VIM Celebration at Missouri UMC. Following his address, Bishop Sherer brought together Bishop Machado, Rev. Ken Lutgen, Rev. Max Marble, Rev. Larry Williams and a few others. The conversation that day set the ground and boundaries for what has become the church partnerships administered by the Mozambique Initiative whereby every parish in Mozambique has at least one partner congregation in Missouri. And, every United Methodist parish in Mozambique receives funds sufficient to enable it, at a minimum, to support its pastor and/or provide a parsonage.

Church-to-Church Pairings

The idea of linking a congregation in Missouri directly with a congregation in Mozambique emerged as early as 1989. The 1990 report of the MCRC speaks

> of the possibility of entering into a **new** phase of our Covenant. Bishop Machado of the Mozambique churches has provided us with a list of churches which are stabilized enough (as stabilized as a church could be in a terror environment), which would like to enter into a 'direct partner' relationship. This will be an exciting phase of our relationship, as our churches which desire to participate, can be in direct contact with sister churches in Mozambique. It is indeed a great distance to Mozambique, but by the 'direct partnership' program the distance will be shortened by letter and the **nearness of heart**. (Journal, 1990, p. 205)

Though the concept of pairing congregations in Mozambique and Missouri has always been enticing, the implementation is quite difficult. The 1991 Journal contains this sentence in the report of the Division of Missions, under the Covenant with Mozambique section, hinting that the pairings might be improved. "The Committee [MCRC] is also pairing churches at this time for better covenant relationships." (Journal, 1991, p. 228) The next mention of partnerships in formal reports does not occur until 1996 when the MCRC report includes: "Several congregations in our conference are exploring ways to be in direct partnership with specific congregations in Mozambique." (Journal, 1996, p. 245) Then in 1998 we read, "We have focused our efforts on establishing and supporting church-to-church links between congregations in Missouri and parishes in Mozambique so that such partnerships might strengthen the Church in making disciples for Jesus Christ." (Journal, 1998, p. 349)

First, in the early years of the covenant, only a very few parishes in Mozambique could be considered "stabilized enough" or were located in a safe area where persons could travel and deliver information or resources. Second, there was the language barrier requiring translation between English and Portuguese or another language used in Mozambique. And even when a document was translated, it often required further interpretation for understanding of nuances and cultural differences.

Third, the infrastructure for communication was virtually non-existent in Mozambique. Missourians, who are used to a postal system that can deliver a letter anywhere in the US within 5 days at a cost of pennies, often could not grasp why they did not get a letter back from a village in Mozambique. Yet the postage in Mozambique would be the equivalent of a days wages, if mail service reached that location and if paper and pen could be found in the village and if someone was literate and capable of writing. Now that faxes and email are available in limited urban areas of Mozambique, some Missouri congregations become jealous when they hear of another partner that have frequent communication via such modern conveniences.

Fourth, there was no reliable banking network or infrastructure for financial transactions. Nearly all financial transactions had to be done in cash and face-to-face. Fifth, pairings tended to be easily be made with churches in the capital city, Maputo, where there was access to information and communication channels. More remote locations just could not be reached or were forgotten. Sixth, the level of support from congregations in Missouri varied greatly, creating inequities in Mozambique.

Seventh, Bishop Machado pointed out that having partners from some, but not all parishes in Mozambique created even more problems among neighboring parishes. Eighth, there was great desire in Mozambique that resources go to priority projects that assist the entire church and not be concentrated in a few parishes. They wanted to participate in the determination of projects being supported. They wanted to do their part and not to become dependent on charity.

Fortunately, these and other challenges have been overcome in time as Mozambique's economy has become stronger, as Missourians have become more knowledgeable of the realities in Mozambique, as more dialogue is possible between Mozambique and Missouri United Methodists, as staff are placed to assist the communication, and as friendships develop to the point that we know one another's names. What began with a promise to learn about, and to pray for, another conference has evolved to a mutual vision of being about the work of the Kingdom of God together, even as we use and contributed different gifts. Even while we are separated by geography, language and culture, we are united as a single church, by the one God, through one baptism and one Lord of all.

Covenant Evolves and Becomes Personal – The Mozambique Initiative

Carol P. Kreamer
Coordinator, Mozambique Initiative

Covenant: an agreement between two parties;
a solemn promise or vow, especially between God and people.
Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Corinthians 2:5-6

It had been a long day in August 2002. The group working at the Massinga Communications Center had finished their week of construction work, packed their personal belongings, and made their goodbyes to their new friends for life. Leaving was emotional after building close relationships. But the group had to move on back toward Maputo for the Consultation, making one more stop along the way. The people of Nevada United Methodist Church in Missouri were going to visit their covenant partner, Canda United Methodist Church in the Inhambane South District of Mozambique. How exciting – visiting one's partner, 8,000 miles from home. But it wasn't just a visit. Nevada had corresponded with their covenant partner. They had fully supported their covenant, even sending extra funds so a pastor would be appointed. They had contributed bikes for pastors, donated to flood relief – and funded a well for safe water. The new well, drilled in the Canda community, was being dedicated *that* day! The glory of worship; the feeling of covenant; meeting church partners -- wrap all these experiences in one and it is unimaginable. The events of the day took longer than expected. It did not matter. The group returned to Maputo but the *Mozambique Initiative* Consultation (*MIC III*) opening ceremony with Bishop Machado and the country's Minister of Education was all finished. The *MIC III* participants were returning to the hotel just as the mission team was checking in. Mary, a retiree in the Nevada delegation greeted me. *"Carol, this has been the most incredible day of my whole life! Thank you! Thank you!"*

This story, however briefly told, demonstrates the power of covenant relationship. It is a strong and enduring connection in Christ through the church.

The Covenant between the Missouri Annual Conference and the Mozambique Area of the United Methodist Church had its beginnings with Bishop W. T. Handy in the nineteen-eighties. The covenant was a conference-to-conference covenant to support the church in Mozambique during a time of civil war and through the end of that civil war in 1992. After the civil war ended, after democratic elections in 1994, new opportunities for mission and ministry arose. Bishop Ann B. Sherer was appointed to Missouri in 1992 and took her Episcopal visit to Mozambique in January 1995. There she had an experience that

would transform not only her, but also the relationship between the United Methodist Churches of Missouri and Mozambique for many years to come. In 1997 a new ten-year commitment began to strengthen the United Methodist Church in Mozambique through church-to-church partnering.

The Miracle in Mozambique

A "Miracle in Mozambique" task force, chaired by Rev. Kenneth R. Lutgen and staffed By Bishop's Assistant, Rev. Elroy Hines, and Office of Creative Ministries Director, Rev. Max Marble, was formed in 1998 to guide the mission with Mozambique. The task force was a roughly drawn group of people, under the lead of those who had been to Mozambique, particularly Rev. Larry Williams of Saint Paul School of Theology, who had a passion for Mozambique and was fluent in Portuguese, the official language of the country. Those involved had knowledge of Mozambique, primarily through their tours of the country or their missions to Chicuque Rural Hospital[1] and Cambine Mission Station, the two flagships of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. [2]

1998

In 1998 the focus was in three areas: 1) church-linking partnerships, 2) goats for Mozambique, and 3) Hope for the Children of Africa, a church-wide study and fund-raising effort proposed by the Council of Bishops.

Covenant Partnerships. Mozambique is one of the poorest countries on earth. When Bishop Ann B. Sherer went to Mozambique in 1997 for her second visit, what she saw was pastors whose families were dying of disease due to malnutrition and hunger. It broke her heart. She thought, we in Missouri are able to pay our pastors a salary. Surely, in this country where the per capita income is only $89 per year, we can do something to help these pastors and their families survive.

And so the concept of church-to-church covenants was born. People said, "Bishop, it's too complicated. You just can't do it." But Bishop Sherer presented the vision to the people of Missouri at the Annual Conference sessions in 1998. The goal was to provide salary support for every pastor in the 130 churches in Mozambique. By the end of 1998, 105 congregations and 32 individuals/families made

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[1] The formal official name of the Hospital includes RURAL. This is a technical designation used by the Ministry of Health in Mozambique that describes the location, facilities, and staffing and medical treatment one would find at the location. A Rural Hospital is larger than a clinic, but less sophisticated than a "provincial" hospital located in the capitol of the province.

[2] The formal name is the United Methodist Church in Mozambique, not of Mozambique. Bishop Machado has often used this distinction of preposition to emphasize that it is the UMC that is located in Mozambique, not the UMC that comes out of Mozambique. This is another subtle way of affirming the unity and integrity of the UMC regardless of its location.

covenant commitments, which supported 54 parishes at the $900 level, and 20 parishes with a portion of that amount. In addition, 10 of the 19 districts received some support from Missouri.

Goats for Mozambique. Ordinance and landmines do not discriminate. War ravages a country in every way. It destroys people. It destroys infrastructure. And it destroys livestock. In 1998, working through Heifer Project International (HPI), the Missouri Area explored the possibility of helping to replace the goat population in Mozambique. Leading up to Annual Conference Sessions of 1998, churches in Missouri campaigned for "Kids for Kids" and raised funds to purchase goats for Mozambique. This campaign was tremendously successful, raising funds to supply over 1,240 goats for Mozambique. At a cost of $120 per goat the total contributed was $148,751 USD. The HPI goat project is located in the Zambezia Province in Northern Mozambique, where much of the fighting took place during the civil war.

Church-Wide Study: Hope for the Children of Africa. Hope for the Children of Africa is a Bishop's Initiative that grew out of awareness of the needs of the great continent of Africa, and especially the plight of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. In 1998 it became a time for every church in the Missouri Area to learn about the country and the United Methodist Church of Mozambique. A Study Guide and Book of Stories were assembled and mailed to every church in the Missouri Area. The Study Guide contained a brief history of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique, the grim statistics about the country and its people, and stories of Cambine Mission Station, Chicuque Rural Hospital and the Children of the War project at Teles Orphanage.[3] The Chicuque Rural Hospital system, which includes all three missions, is the flagship of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. Chicuque is one of only two hospitals serving an area with a population over 2 million. The people of Inhambane Province know that when they come to Chicuque they will receive good patient care. The study guide also contained a list of persons who had been to Mozambique and could be contacted for speaking engagements.

In addition to the Study Guide, a Book of Stories was published. Persons who had been to Mozambique wrote these heart-rending stories. Their written experiences made the people of Mozambique come alive to all who read the stories. Stories of thanksgiving, of joy, of singing and dancing to the offering; stories of loss and the effects of war, of pain and suffering; stories of the church, the vitality of faith and strength of the people. These helped make the need for covenant come alive.

[3] We in the US tend to call Teles an orphanage. The original name of the project created by the Women's Society in Mozambique was "Children of the War Project."

1999

In 1999, an appeal was made to both the Missouri East and Missouri West Annual Conferences for more covenants for church-to-church partnerships with Mozambique. It was announced that a Coordinator would be assigned as a full-time staff person to manage the covenants. That Coordinator would be going to Mozambique in August 1999 with a leadership delegation from Missouri. The leadership delegation would learn the realities of the country and the context in which the United Methodist Church in Mozambique exists. They would build relationships, connecting with leadership of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique.

On August 18th twelve persons from Missouri, including one GBGM Director, one representative of the Arkansas Annual Conference, and one GBGM staffer, traveled to Mozambique. While in Mozambique, this leadership delegation divided into four smaller groups to visit different regions of the country. Three persons traveled to the far northern province of Cabo Del Gado. There, they visited the churches in Pemba, Metuge and Montepuez. They experienced a grand welcome with town officials greeting them formally. They also experienced the Muslim presence in the north, and the desire of Muslim leaders to expand all down the coast to southern Mozambique.

Another group of three persons visited the province of Zambezia, where the HPI goat project was located. This group experienced the "passing of the gift" – that is, the giving of the first offspring from one adopting family to another adopting family. This worship experience was videotaped and made available to the people of the Missouri Area.

A group of three persons traveled to Nampula Province. They visited Nacala, on the coast of the province, where they saw a huge church building, unfinished for many years. This church was started, then redesigned too large for the funds raised, and never finished. It has just recently been completed [2002]. There are several very large churches in Mozambique that are in similar states of incompletion.

The fourth small group consisted of five persons who traveled to about thirty churches in southern Mozambique. This group, including chairperson Ken Lutgen and coordinator Carol Kreamer, drove up the coast from Maputo to Inhassoro, in the Inhambane North district, and wound its way down through Vilanculos District, Massinga North and South Districts, Morrumbene North and South Districts, Inhambane Central, West and South Districts and finally to Xai-Xai in the Gaza District, before returning to Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. This group was able to visit Cambine Mission Station and Chicuque Hospital, as well as the Women's Homeless Shelter at Hanhane.

The entire group of fourteen delegates, gathered back in Maputo. There they met with Bishop João Somane Machado and most of the Mozambique Annual Conference staff. This was critical to building relationships between the leadership of the two areas. The group heard the vision for the future

of the church in Mozambique and learned the structure of the church in Mozambique. The leadership delegation learned that the evangelization goals included 1) wells for safe drinking water, 2) local education, 3) transportation, and 4) pastor support. These goals became the vision for directing Missouri area projects and gifts during the next two years. On the final Sunday the group again divided up and participated in worship in various area churches.

The Mozambique Initiative, a new structure of the Missouri Area, was established in 1999 after the leadership delegation visited Mozambique. *The Initiative*, with GBGM Missionary, Carol Kreamer, as Coordinator, administers the 400+ covenants between congregations, groups and individuals in Missouri and their 157 parishes and 23 districts in Mozambique. Most Missouri District Superintendents, Bishop Sherer, and many of the Missouri Annual Conference staff persons have individual covenants with parishes or districts in Mozambique.

The Initiative has been instrumental in not only funding clergy salaries in Mozambique but also in the construction of church buildings, parsonages, schools, wells and more. *The Initiative* has made connections between churches that would otherwise be very difficult, sharing prayer and ministry concerns as relationships are built beyond the funding of covenants. *The Initiative,* working with leadership in Mozambique and working from visionary documents provided from GBGM Evangelization and Church Growth (ECG) Consultations in Mozambique (Keith Rae and Anna Workman) seeks to match opportunities for gifts and service with the visions and goals of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique.

The Initiative reports periodically to both Bishop Machado (Mozambique) and Bishop Sherer (Missouri) and to *The Mozambique Initiative* Advisory Committee. *The Initiative* seeks out feedback from those who participate in mission and ministry, striving to effectively interpret the needs of the Church in Mozambique.

Since 1998, over $570,000 has been generated toward the partner covenants ($900/parish per year, $1,200/district per year).[4] One might think this would develop a dependency upon the funds to provide pastoral support. But this could not be farther from the reality. The covenant partnership support is just the beginning of the relationships developed.

[4] The funds go to the parish/district to support the pastor/superintendent. These funds do not go to the individual. Missouri United Methodists are not "keeping" these persons paid; they are ensuring that the parishes/districts can adequately support the positions.

2000-2002

Early in 2000 devastating floods hit Mozambique. Over 700 lives (probably many more) were lost and millions of people were displaced. Because of Missouri's relationship with Mozambique, Bishop Sherer was instrumental in establishing a "Bishop's Appeal" for flood relief through UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief. In 2000 the Missouri Area contributed over $172,000 toward Advance #15600-0, flood relief for Mozambique, and then contributed more in year 2001 when floods occurred again. This appeal raised over $3 million church-wide and helped to establish an UMCOR office in Maputo, Mozambique, where there had previously not been an UMCOR presence. A permanent UMCOR Coordinator, Rev. Moraias Quissico, was hired and continues to run the emergency relief and recovery program in Mozambique. In addition to the advance, the Missouri Area contributed thousands of health kits and hundreds of Medicine Boxes through UMCOR to Mozambique. A Missouri Area VIM team at the Sager-Brown UMCOR depot in Baldwin, Louisiana actually packed and sent the first container of relief items from the United Methodist Church to Mozambique.

Bikes for Pastors. A little bit can go a long way! A small group of men in Missouri's Columbia-Mexico District in Missouri had a vision of working with the United Methodist Men (UMM) of their whole district to provide some bicycles for pastors in Mozambique. This idea expanded and was promoted to all UMM's throughout Missouri and generally to all churches. The fund raised over $44,000 in 2000 and 2001, provided bikes to every pastor in Mozambique, and can continue providing bikes as new churches start. All this because of an evangelization goal of 199 bikes and 19 motorbikes -- and the knowledge that the Coordinator of Transportation in Mozambique was also the President of the "Men's Society" in Mozambique. A truck was also purchased for one of the district superintendents. When the opportunity arose, an e-mail appeal raised the necessary $2,500 overnight. All of this is about relationships.

The Living Water Society. Each year there has been a special offering at Annual Conference sessions for Mozambique. In 2000, knowing the priority goal of safe drinking water, the Annual Conference offering theme was "Wells for Mozambique, Wellness for Missouri Children". This campaign was immensely successful as people learned they could drill a well and save an entire village. Both Missouri East and Missouri West Annual Conferences set historic records with these offerings. After the $15,000 needed for the Wellness ministry in Missouri was taken, over $104,000 was dedicated to providing safe drinking water in Mozambique. A Missouri committee, led by Mr. Bill Kreamer, and a Mozambique committee chaired by Rev. Moraias Quissico, was established. Eight wells were drilled in 2001 and then four more in 2002.

Mozambique Initiative Field Representative placed in Mozambique, begins April 2000. Bob Sutton, a GBGM Missioner of Hope from Missouri, was assigned as the Field Representative for *The Initiative*. In April 2000 he was stationed in Maputo after training in Zambia. With the advent of e-mail and the help of conference leaders in Mozambique, partner churches began to receive informational reports and photos early in 2001. Though the process was quite tedious, this gave the covenant partners in Missouri a connection to their sister churches in Mozambique.

In May 2002 staffing was revisited and native Mozambican, Ezequiel Marcos Nhantumbo, as M.I. Representative, came on staff with *The Mozambique Initiative,* in place of the previous Field Representative. Ezequiel's language skills and knowledge of the country and the church have been real bonuses to the communication process. Through Ezequiel, congregations have been able to share joys and concerns and lift each other up in prayer. They have been able to tell each other about the ministries of their churches and learn about their communities. With opportunities for relationships lifted up in the Missouri area, a flow of covenants continues to be forthcoming. Many congregations have renewed their covenants before the original term expires and others have requested new covenants all during the year. Terms of covenants have varied from one to ten years and regular amounts committed vary from $25 per year to $1,200 per congregation, group, or individual. Occasionally there have been unusually large dollar covenants, like tithes from capital campaigns, with which to build new church facilities or schools.

Website. 2001 saw the advent of new technology for *The Mozambique Initiative*. Previously, messages had been emailed to hundreds of "Friends of Mozambique" using Microsoft Outlook's distribution feature. In fact, this is how information was disbursed to people during the flood crisis in early 2000, three weeks before U.S. network news carried the story. But this became more and more difficult as the lists of names grew longer and longer. After visiting Mozambique in December 2000, Laura Marconette of Lee's Summit, Missouri began to design a website for *The Mozambique Initiative.* At the Mozambique Initiative Consultation II (MICII) in October 2001, the new website, www.mozambiqueinitiative.org, was unveiled. The website allowed *The Mozambique Initiative* to post information on individual churches and general information about ongoing ministries, projects and news articles.

List Serve. The website also came with a list serve capability to reach an unlimited number of persons through email. By early 2002, about 1,000 email addresses were on the list serve and messages could be sent periodically to an ever-growing number of people. On May 26, 2002, when a tragic train-wreck occurred in Mozambique, killing 200 persons and injuring hundreds more, the story was on TV news that evening. But the news that one of our United Methodist pastors, Rev. Silva Paulo Magudo of Moamba, had been in the crash came through the "Friends of Mozambique" list serve. Churches in Missouri responded with messages of condolence and prayer immediately. The three Missouri partners

prayed in worship that Sunday and began assistance funds for their two sister congregations that had lost their not only their pastor, but other congregation members also. *The Mozambique Initiative* could not do all that it does without the gift of email and the tools of modern technology.

Consultation

The Mozambique Initiative began holding Consultations early after its formation. The first *Mozambique Initiative Consultation (MIC)* was held in Kansas City, Missouri in May 2000. Workshops were offered on UMCOR Emergency Flood Relief, Covenant Partnership, VIM in Mozambique, and more. Bishops Machado and Sherer addressed the gathering of about 90 persons from around Missouri and other Annual Conferences. Participants came from the Troy (NY/VT) Annual Conference, Virginia Annual Conference, and the North Texas Annual Conference as well as from the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) and from Mozambique. Rev. Max Marble and Dustin Cates led music and worship in the spirit of Mozambican Methodism.

The second Mozambique Initiative Consultation (MIC II) was held in St. Louis, Missouri in October 2001. This consultation offered more workshops and again Bishops Sherer and Machado addressed the gathering of about 100 persons. In spite of the September 11th disaster and travel warnings and many cancellations, participants came from the Troy Annual Conference, New York Annual Conference, Virginia Annual Conference, Florida Annual Conference, North Alabama Annual Conference, North Texas Annual Conference, Rocky Mountain Annual Conference, Missouri East and Missouri West Annual Conferences, the Mozambique North and Mozambique South Annual Conferences, and from GBGM. Workshops were facilitated jointly by Mozambican and US leaders and included Covenant Partnership, Communications, MIC III Overview, History of Mozambique and the Church, UMCOR Emergency Relief, Women's Projects, VIM in Mozambique, and Mutual Ministry/Hosting of Teams from Mozambique.

MICIII – An Historic Event

The third Mozambique Initiative Consultation (MICIII) was an historic occasion. *MICIII* was held in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. It was the first consultation ever to be held in the country that the ministry serves. In July and August 2002, nine groups and teams, totaling ninety-three persons were sent out of Missouri in different capacities to Mozambique. All centered around *MICIII*, August 8-11, 2002, at the Rovuma Hotel in Maputo. Worship was held at Malanga United Methodist Church, the largest church building in the Maputo area.

Addressing the *Mozambique Initiative Consultation III* at Malanga UMC in Maputo, the Mozambique Government Minister of Education, Dr. Alcido Eduardo Nguenha, described how the church, as an institution for moral development, actively contributed to the liberty of the country. Ten years of peace is celebrated this year [2002]. Dr. Nguenha helped the 200 delegates from the U.S., Mozambique and Germany understand the progress and the challenges that education in Mozambique presents. Dr. Nguenha expressed his gratitude for the United Methodist Church's role in the development of education, particularly recognizing the schools at the Cambine Mission Station in the Inhambane Province of Mozambique. Cambine is a 100+ year-old mission station that includes several schools for all ages.

Dr. Nguenha stated that the development of the nation was connected to the health of the people. He discussed the effects of cholera, malaria and HIV/AIDS -- all of which are expanded by malnutrition. He said it is everyone's responsibility to reduce the infection rates and that centers for education of youth and young adults are needed. The church plays a crucial role in stopping the spread of disease.

Over 200 persons from the United States, Germany and Mozambique attended the third *Mozambique Initiative Consultation (MICIII)* that was held in Maputo. Over ninety persons from Mozambique (including 22 district superintendents), eighty-five persons from the United Methodist Churches in the Missouri Area (including four District Superintendents), fourteen from United Methodist Churches of the Virginia Annual Conference (including one District Superintendent), and one person from the United Methodist Church of Germany were among the participants. Persons from the General Board of Global Ministries Evangelization and Church Growth (one staff, one director), UMCOR, and Habitat for Humanity International were also among the participants.

Bishop Ann B. Sherer (Missouri Area), assisted by Larry Williams, Bev Boehmer, and Steve Williams, brought the Bishop's Ambassadorial Youth Choir, which included twenty-three youth, two children and five adults, to sing in events on tour in southern Africa and at the Consultation. Other Missouri Area groups in mission and study tours included two Volunteers In Mission (VIM) teams building a communications center in Massinga (leaders Laura Marconette, Mike Button, Doug Kraus and Liz Steeby), a VIM team led by Joe Bartelsmeyer working on the Chamanculo United Methodist Church building in the Maputo area, and a VIM team lead by Barbara Stone to Chicuque Hospital. Two teams, led by Ken McGrail and Steve Cox, visited churches in Mozambique - one in the northern district of Sofala and one in the southern Conference districts of Inhambane and Gaza Provinces. One group was a mission study touring South Africa, Mozambique, and Africa University. A VIM team from Virginia, lead by Ted Smith and Rhonda Van Dyke, worked on a project at Tinga Tinga, near the city of Xai-Xai in the Gaza District. Other mission teams from Missouri (working at Chimoio) New York (working at

Lichinga) and the North Texas Conferences (working at Chicuque) were in the country at the same time, but unable to participate fully in the consultation due to scheduling constraints.

The Consultation opened on Thursday evening with worship at Malanga, the largest United Methodist Church in the city of Maputo. The Youth Choirs from Missouri and from Malanga sang at this opening. Bishop João Somane Machado welcomed participants and introduced the delegates and special guests from every district in Mozambique. Carol Kreamer, Coordinator of *The Mozambique Initiative,* introduced the balance of the delegates from the United States and Germany.

Bishop Sherer addressed the Consultation, celebrating the twenty-five years of independence and the accomplishments of the last ten years. She told the delegates that Norway and Sweden give more money than the United States in aid to Mozambique. She challenged those from the United States 1) to write to their senators to tell them about Mozambique, and 2) to be ambassadors. She asked each delegate to tell ten people how they have helped the people of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique to a) dig a well, b) plant a church, c) build a school, and 2) be a part of economic development.

The summary address was followed by workshops on various locations in the Maputo Area. Workshops included: Justapax (Justice/Peace) led by Dr. Alfiada Zunguza; Men's Projects and the Trades Schools, led by Conference Men's Society president, Estranho Adolfo; Women's Projects (literacy project, training center, micro credit) led by Women's Project Coordinator, Joaquina Nhanala; Youth Activities, led by Naftal Zunquza; Education and Theological Education, led by Armando Marapuxane Macamo; Healthcare in Mozambique led by Roger LeCompte; Evangelization and Church Growth, led by Fernando Matsimbe; Emergency Services and the Living Water Society (UMCOR & wells project), led by Moraias Quissico and James Humbane; and Communication, led by Antonio Wilson.

Bishops Machado and Sherer hosted a banquet at the Rovuma Carlton Hotel on Friday evening. About 200 persons attended the banquet, including the Second Secretary from the United States Embassy, James B. Story. Mr. Story is a United Methodist from South Carolina. The delegates had been challenged to sit at tables with persons that they did not know, mixing Mozambican and non-Mozambican delegates, so that they could share their experiences with mission and ministry in Mozambique. As is the tradition, gifts were presented to those hosting the event from Mozambique.

Saturday morning presented two options for participation. One was an opportunity to actually work on projects at the Maputo Area churches of Chamanculo and Mahangalene. Chamanculo is the oldest church in Maputo (over 75 years) and has special programs to teach sewing and computer skills. Mahangalene is in the process of finishing their new church building. The other option on Saturday morning was to participate in a dialogue session, discussing issues that arose from the workshops and the experience.

The *Working Group for Mozambique*, a small group of leaders from the various Annual Conferences involved in mission and ministry in Mozambique, also met on Saturday morning during the Consultation. These leaders shared information and experiences regarding how we build the ministry next in Mozambique and the next generation of leadership. Reports were given from the various annual conferences regarding their activities in Mozambique.

Youth Choirs from the entire Maputo area came together for a closing concert event late Saturday afternoon. Many singing groups led a spirited worship in music. The final musical number, which came from the Missouri and Malanga choirs in a joint number, touched the hearts of all those present. This was followed by a presentation of gifts from Bishop Machado to each of the Annual Conferences represented at the event, and then the final sending forth to close the event.

On Sunday morning the delegates were ushered to fifteen area churches to worship on the special Thanksgiving Sunday. Thanksgiving, a combination of harvest celebration and consecration of gifts Sunday, is usually celebrated on the first Sunday in August. However, Maputo area churches postponed their celebrations to coincide with the Consultation. Delegates worshiped at the churches of Betania, Bento Navesse, James Humbane, Malhazine and Zimpeto in the Maputo North District; to Chamanculo, Malanga, Malhangalene and Xinhambanine in the Maputo East District; and to Liberdade, Machava, Matola, Zacarias Manhica, T-3 and Macedonia in the Maputo West District. Worshippers were amazed at the spirit of giving with joy and singing, recitations, dancing, and presentations characterize. Gifts to the church included not only monetary gifts, but also harvest gifts such as corn, bananas, oranges, potatoes, cassava; tangible gifts like chairs, buckets, tubs, household items; live animals like chickens, ducks and goats; and just about anything imaginable that had some value to the giver and the church. Following worship each church hosted their guests with a luncheon at the church or at a parishioner's home.

Again, the historic nature of this event lies in the fact that it was held in Mozambique, one of the poorest countries of the world. While previous consultations for the purpose of sharing and networking mission and ministries, had been held in the United States, this was the first to be held in Mozambique. A committee, led by Rev. Joaquina Nhanala, planned the event with the help of *The Mozambique Initiative.*

Covenants Become Personal. Since MIC III, the covenant relationships have become more personal. Of the 93 travelers to Mozambique, many actually visited their covenant partners. They met pastors, leaders and the people of the church. The story of the people of Nevada UMC in Nevada, Missouri speaks volumes. The women of Nevada started with a covenant in 1999. They did not know their covenant partner. They just heard about the need and knew they had to respond. So they raised their covenant support. Then they called *The Initiative* and said, "Carol [Kreamer], we gave our $900 for 1999, and we have our $900 for 2000, what can we do next?" So in 2000 they raised $1,180.75 for Bikes for Pastors in Mozambique. They heard the stories of pastors unable to travel to their parishioners and they

helped. They heard about the need for wells, especially where their covenant partner, Canda, was located and they raised another $2,000, and after that $2,000 more. In 2001 they learned, by corresponding with the DS of Inhambane South, that if Canda had a parsonage the Bishop would appoint a pastor. So they sent not only their $900 support, but also another $2,000 to build a pastor's home. A pastor was appointed in December 2001.

The story does not end. In 2002, three laypersons from Nevada, Missouri had an opportunity to visit their covenant partner, Canda UMC in the Inhambane South District of Mozambique. In quite a God-moment, the day that they were able to visit, the new well, which had just been drilled [through the *Living Water Society*], was to be dedicated! When the group arrived back in Maputo, one of the Nevada ladies said to me, "Carol, I know we're late [for the Consultation in Maputo], but this has been the most incredible day in my entire life!" They learned while at Canda, that because the area now has water, they are able to sustain livestock. So they are now raising funds to buy livestock that will help this community survive. The three who went, and saw, and felt the presence of Christ in that small remote village of Canda, Mozambique, returned with a spirit of renewal of their lives. They have gone on to take the lead in promoting the "Retired Pastors and Widows Fund" for Mozambican pastors. They have spoken at area churches that were spiritually moved to be involved with the issue of retired pastors in Mozambique.

For these three, being a Christian is more than theology. It is more than pew-sitting or even being on a committee. It is more than faith demonstrated in words alone - it is in every action of their being. They extend the spirit of Christ so that others might hear about faith in action. Their covenant became personal!

Living Water Society develops further. In February 2002 the United Methodist Church in Mozambique and *The Mozambique Initiative* secured the services of Mr. James Humbane as Director of *The Living Water Society*. He was charged with implementing the jointly developed plan to provide safe drinking water in villages in Mozambique. After much research, Mr. Humbane discovered a partner opportunity to realize the goals of *The Living Water Society*. In October 2002 Mr. Humbane came to the United States and attended the *Lifewater International* Annual Conference in Pasadena, California. *Lifewater International* is a Christian, volunteer-based organization dedicated to helping the rural poor obtain safe drinking water. At the conference, James had the opportunity to learn about Lifewater's community water development strategy. James' presence at the conference was greatly motivating to *Lifewater's* volunteers. There he told the story of the need for safe drinking water in Mozambique. The effects of unsafe drinking water on rural communities are devastating to families, especially children who are susceptible to water-borne diseases. Mr. Humbane made that fact come alive at this conference. Lifewater International then sent a proposal to *The Mozambique Initiative*, through Mr. Humbane, to

partner in *The Living Water Society* venture. Partnering with *Lifewater International*, who provides training and equipment to drill wells, a one-year program has been approved by *The Mozambique Initiative* to purchase two shallow well drilling machines, drilling materials to drill 10 new wells, hand pump repair tools and spare parts to rehabilitate 20 existing wells, and training materials for two hygiene and sanitation workshops. The drill rigs are designed for rural settings where highly engineered rigs tend not to be effective. These special rigs fit in the back of a pick-up truck and native crews will be trained by *Lifewater* volunteers to operate them.

Mr. Humbane has also connected *The Living Water Society* with USAID through his association with Mr. James Story at the United States Embassy. USAID will fund the repair and replacement of wells that are currently not functioning due to broken pumps or other equipment problem.

Partnerships like this stretch Missouri contributions much farther than they could go otherwise. The hope is that these partnerships and continuing contributions can make *The Living Water Society* an ongoing independent organization, providing water beyond the one-year commitment, for many years in the future.

The Future

The Covenant Commitment. As *The Mozambique Initiative* has developed so have the covenants. In 2002, the covenant commitment grew from providing pastor support of $900-1200 per year, to more fully involve the Missouri partners. In addition to the financial support, the commitment now includes a promise to communicate with the covenant partner at least once per year, to put the covenant partner pastor and church name on a church prayer list so they are remembered daily, and to name a primary contact person to be the leader of the covenant partner ministry in the congregation.

In addition, *The Initiative* has offered covenant partners the opportunity to travel to visit their sister churches in Mozambique, using the services of *M.I.* Representative, Ezequiel Marcos Nhantumbo.

VIM Structure in Mozambique. The Initiative has been instrumental in connecting GBGM Mission Volunteers staff-person, Jeanie Blankenbaker, with the leadership of Mozambique to establish a VIM structure in Mozambique. This will allow more mission teams to travel to Mozambique from other countries as well as facilitating Mozambican teams traveling both inside and outside of Mozambique. In June 2002 Rev. Zaqueu Silva Ranchaze was appointed as VIM Coordinator in Mozambique. He is scheduled to come to the United States to meet Missouri leaders and participate in the Mozambique VIM Reunion and annual VIM Celebration in Columbia, Missouri, February 1, 2003.

The Initiative will participate in the historic first Annual Conference session of the newly joined Missouri East and West Annual Conferences. Representatives are scheduled to come from Mozambique to be a part of that historic session.

To date, from 1998 through September 2002, over 1.2 million dollars was raised from Missouri for Mozambique. The unique aspect of this initiative is that it facilitates the building of the relationships that keep commitments flowing. It is not just process that keeps all of those involved together. It is God's presence in every aspect of the covenant relationships that makes it possible. Jesus asked for water from the woman at the well (John 4) and barriers of gender, race, and nationality were all broken down -- while sharing a simple cup of water. And the first Christian evangelist (an un-named Samaritan woman) went into town to witness about the man who "told me everything I had ever done". The consultation model, *Working Group*, and covenant model that *The Mozambique Initiative* established facilitates that kind of witness both in the United States and in Mozambique.

The Mozambique Initiative, as it presently exists, is a very active initiative that supports mutual mission and ministry with the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. *Initiative* Coordinator, Carol Kreamer, has been contacted, not only by hundreds of churches and individuals in the Missouri Area, but also by those from many other Annual Conferences inside and outside the U.S. There is mission going on which would be helpful to share among all of the entities involved in Mozambique. This includes agencies of the church, staff involved, as well as Annual Conferences around the country.

The Mozambique Initiative is excited that it has been able to establish these processes. It is encouraged that the United Methodist Church in Mozambique will take the lead in perpetuating them, allowing for broad coordination of the mission and ministry between the U.S., Mozambique, and other countries. *The Mozambique Initiative* strives for mutual ministry encouraging the exchange of gifts between Mozambique and Conferences in the U.S. and promoting effective stewardship with ministry in Mozambique.

There is an energy that is captured in this consultation and covenant model. It is *not* about control. It is not about a legal document – it is *a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.* It *is* about working together and celebrating ministry together. This is a model in which mission comes alive!

"This has been the most incredible day of my whole life!" Yes, for the people of Canda in Mozambique now have new friends with whom they have shared worship, and they have safe water and they can begin to build a herd of animals to sustain themselves. And the people of Nevada, Missouri in the United States know that through Christian covenant they have found new meaning to being church!

"but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty."

John 4:14a

This is Life

Ann Brookshire Sherer
Resident Bishop, the Missouri Conference

The old woman moved slowly and deliberately toward the newly constructed well. The ribbon had just been cut and now as the Bishop pumped, water gushed forth. As the people cheered, the old woman kept pressing forward. When she reached the flowing water, she scooped up two hands-full of water and, throwing it to the sky, shouted, "This is life. This is life."

As the Bishop looked at here she said again, "This is life. What is your church? I want to be part of a church that gives life." Today in this Mozambican community there is a thriving United Methodist Church. Bishop Joao Somane Machado makes certain that a new church is started each time a well is drilled in a location without a United Methodist Church.

In 1988 Bishop W.T. Handy and Rev. Larry Williams, Missouri Area, and Bishop Joao Somane Machado of Mozambique began a relationship between Mozambique and Missouri. This relationship developed over the years and in 1997 a formal covenant relationship was established between the two areas. The conferences recognized that mutual sharing and mission would enrich both areas. A Mozambique Initiative Committee, chaired by Rev. Ken Lutgen in the United States, was initiated. In the U.S. Carol Kreamer, General Board of Global Ministries missionary, staffed the initiative. In Mozambique the Initiative was staffed first by missionary Bob Sutton (whose wife, Camille, worked on the Mozambique Conference staff), and later by Ezequiel Nhantumbo. Three Mozambique Consultations have been held – 2000 in Kansas City, 2001 in St. Louis, and 2002 in Maputo, Mozambique. All conferences with relationships to Mozambique are invited to participate, so that Bishop Machado can coordinate the work. Persons from New York, Troy, North Texas, Virginia, North Alabama, Arkansas, Florida and Germany conferences, along with Missouri and Mozambique, have participated.

As a part of this connection, there is now a covenant relationship between every church in Mozambique and a church or churches in Missouri. These $900 covenants, administered by Bishop Machado, make sure pastors' salaries are paid, the church and parsonage are kept repaired, and outreach ministries can thrive. First, the church makes every effort to pay the pastor themselves. When they can, then the money goes into a building or ministry fund. No longer do the little children whose parents serve as pastors have to suffer from malnutrition. They are able to have enough to eat. The pastor is able to serve without worrying how to provide the next meal for the family. Parsonages and churches now have money for improvements. In addition there are $1200 covenants with the 23 district superintendents and several conference staff. Individuals and

$1200 covenants with the 23 district superintendents and several conference staff. Individuals and churches in Missouri have also helped construct church buildings in Mozambique, taught English and computer skills at Chicuque, served as medical personnel, repaired and improved the facilities at the theological school in Cambine, and given generously of time and money to other needed projects.

Over a million dollars has flowed to Mozambique in the last 5 years from Misssouri. More than 400 churches in Missouri, along with groups and individuals, have shared in a covenant with almost 200 churches or staff members in Mozambique. In addition to the covenants between churches, there has been generous giving to dig wells and to found the Living Water Society. Initially, twelve wells were dug. Now drilling and transport equipment is in the hands of the Mozambican church, local personnel are trained and there is the potential of drilling dozens of wells. Living water, new life, is flowing into Mozabique as gifts from Missouri are shared.

The people and pastors of Missouri Methodism see the world differently. Over 300 United Methodists from Missouri have traveled to Mozambique to do Volunteers in Mission work, to make friends, to learn evangelism, to understand the global nature of the church. Each has come home with renewed zeal and that is living water, new life, flowing into Missouri congregations. Bishop Machado has preached many times in Missouri. Placing his two fists over his heart, he has exhorted, "You must have a burden on your heart for those who do not know Christ. Let God put the burden on your heart so your churches may grow.

In 2002, a team of Mozambicans is coming to Missouri to teach churches how to reach out, how to serve people and how to invited them into a relationship with Christ and the church. Rev. Fernando Matsimbe, the evangelism director of the Mozambican church, has visited Missouri at least twice and encouraged Missouri Methodists to reach out in love, to live and tell the story. Living water, new life, comes into the Missouri United Methodist Conference.

Global consciousness is increasing among the church people in Missouri. When the floods come, as they often do in Mozambique[1] the conference receptionist is inundated with calls. "Where are the floods? Is my covenant church affected? What do they need? How can we help? Do you know if all the people are safe?"

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[1] As we were doing the final edit on this issue, word came of another flood in northern Mozambique, with around 100,000 families left homeless. This in an area where about 655,000 people were already suffering from famine. Thousands of acres of crops were destroyed, along with homes, roads, and bridges.

When there is a major train wreck, as there was in 2002, then the calls come again. "Which of our churches have lost people? What do we need to do?" Prayers go up across the state for the people who are suffering.

Probably 15 years ago, most Missouri Methodists could not have found Mozambique on the map. Now church bulletin boards show the location of their covenant partner church on a Mozambique map. I heard a layperson ask during a discussion, "Where in Africa? It is not all the same, you know. There are just different countries on that continent, just as Mexico and the United States are different countries." Such understanding and compassion is a source of new life. Living water is flowing into Missouri.

Rural populations have responded graciously to the need for wells. They remember having wells dug on their farms in Missouri. Their own grandparents often carried water from the well. They know about testing water and making sure the water is pure. They want to help. Understanding one another's experience and need builds yet another connection for living water to flow.

Mozambicans have taught Missourians about the joy of giving. I remember my second trip to Mozambique in 1997. It was August, Thanksgiving time. The Thanksgiving service is a joy. Each class or village congregation comes to the larger parish in which they reside and bring their gifts from the harvest. Laughing, singing, praising God, each group dances into worship, singing songs of praise. They carry cassava leaves and roots, stalks of sugar cane and bananas, live chickens and baby goats, new chairs and containers of oil, baskets of coconuts and papayas. I remember seeing a 5 or 6-year old boy walk in with this baby brother on his back. Each had a coconut. The baby's little coconut was tucked into the folds of the capalana that supported him on his brother's back. It is a grand procession. But this particular year the smallest village outside Chicuque had nothing. Their crops had been very poor. Their gifts seemed paltry. As the lay leaders sat and talked, a 12-year old boy, Abel, came to them. He tapped the leader on the shoulder. He was ignored. Then he spoke, "You can give me. I will be our gift." For a moment, they did not understand the magnitude of his gift. Abel was giving his life to God. He wanted the tiny, weak, village to give him to God as Hannah gave Samuel. He was giving his life to serve God through ministry. With joy they came in, carrying their tiny little offering of produce, but leading the procession was Abel. Proudly the village gathered around him and offered him to God at the altar. Their best gift! Witnessing such generosity, such stewardship, such willingness to give all they are and have to God – this inspires Missourians. We in Missouri are learning generosity, joyful giving, from our Mozambican colleagues. This is life, living water, flowing into our midst.

During the summer of 2002, I was once again in Mozambique for Thanksgiving. I worshiped at the Chumanculo United Methodist Church. The pastor was a clergywoman, Rev. Victoria Chifeche. She sat in a small straight chair at the beginning of the service. Several persons brought in a large pulpit chair as their gift. They put the pastor in the massive chair and carried her around the congregation as she and all the people clapped and sang. What a delight to give and celebrate the gift! On this trip I was traveling with 19 youth from Missouri. They were overwhelmed with the spirit of joy and sharing which they experienced in this and other services. They want that kind of joy in their worship at home. New life. Living water.

During my first visit to Mozambique, what struck me in the rural areas was that there was absolutely no waste. If a shiny gum wrapper fell to the ground, someone snapped it up and used it as a decoration. There were so few things and absolutely nothing was wasted. The only toys I saw were hand-made cars and airplanes: made from cardboard boxes, scraps of wire, South Africa-beer-can wheels. Yards were swept immaculately. Neat and careful, using every resource with appreciation and care was the typical life stance. It continues to be a powerful witness to be careful stewards of the resources God has given us to be used by all. Such awareness is another source of living water.

To grow in faith and relationship with one another and God: this is life. As living water has flowed back and forth between Missouri and Mozambique the mutual sharing of gifts has enabled the United Methodists in both countries to be enriched, to participate more fully in the abundant life. Mutual ministry has brought hope to the communities of faith on both continents and enriched their potential to faithfully serve God and the church. "This is life. I want to be a part of a church that offers life."

YOUTH MISSION CHOIR TO MOZAMBIQUE

Anna Fisher, Alex Smith, Lindsay Smith

As told to John Gooch

It's a long way from Liberty, Missouri, USA, to Maputo, Mozambique, halfway around the globe, in fact. Or, as Anna said, it's a five-movie flight just from Atlanta to Johannesburg! It's even farther in terms of culture. But it's close in terms of the common aspirations of the human spirit, and the ties that bind United Methodist Christians across the globe. In August of 2002, Bishop Ann Sherer led a 23-voice youth choir from across Missouri United Methodism on a mission to Mozambique that helped cement ties between the conferences – and changed the lives of the youth who went.

Anna, Alex, and Lindsay were three of those youth – all three from Liberty United Methodist Church. They left on a wave of love and support (including financial) from their local church. Their stories are, we suspect, representative of the stories all the youth on the trip could tell. The group met in St. Charles, and then flew to Atlanta, Georgia, where they boarded their flight to Johannesburg, South Africa. They spent 4 days in South Africa, and then went to Mozambique for 8 days – days that changed their lives forever.

All three youth were deeply touched by what they saw in South Africa. Anna says that the most memorable moment of the trip for her was at the cathedral of *Regina Mundi* in Soweto, South Africa, where worshippers were massacred at the beginning of the uprising (against apartheid). She compared the uprising to the civil rights movement in the United States. The cathedral was the headquarters for Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu during apartheid. Alex remembers vividly bullet holes still in the ceiling of the church. Lindsay says they learned that whites came into the church and cut the hands off the statues of Jesus as if to say, "Jesus can't help you now." She and Alex were both impressed that, in the stained-glass the Madonna and Child were pictured as black.

Another reminder of apartheid and the struggle for freedom was a stone monument in memory of the victims and martyrs of apartheid, and a monument outside a school to the youth who died in the struggle.

The apartheid museum also made a major impression. One of the youth said, in an almost dis-believing tone, "it wasn't that long ago!" They have clear photographs of a wall at the museum with a quotation from Nelson Mandela, "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." One suspects that these youth will carry that commitment with them for a long time to come. One exhibit at the museum was an armored car that the police had used during the riots. Alex reports, with a sense of wonder, that "I touched the bullet holes in the glass."

The group visited the Methodist Church in Johannesburg. The Methodist Church in South Africa is autonomous, or, as Lindsay said, "they aren't united!" It was a source of amusement that the pastor was Irish! The social commitment and outreach of this church made a strong impression. Across the street from the church is a racetrack. The church bought one of the stables and set up in that building a ministry called AMCARE. AMCARE provides computer classes, a thrift store, vegetable gardening (where it is possible to raise food for a family of four on a plot of ground the size of a door), housing for AIDS orphans and for battered women and children. On the other side of the church is a fancy hotel that donates old furniture, bedding, and so on, to AMCARE. Because this is a luxury hotel, the used items donated are of high quality. The youth said it was possible for the church in Johannesburg to do this because in South Africa people have money (at least some). When asked about similar missions in Mozambique, they said there aren't any, because there is no money to support them. Without some kind of economic base among the people – and in business – such ministries were impossible in Mozambique. As Lindsay said, "It takes money to make money, or to give money." In Mozambique that money is not available.

Not all of the time in South Africa was spent in the city dealing with apartheid, however. The group went on a two-day safari to Kruger National Park, where they saw wildlife, including

lions, elephants, hippos, rhinos, giraffes, Cape buffalo, all kinds of antelope, and other wildlife. Not your everyday sight in Missouri! Alex said his close-up pictures of a lion were taken with a disposable camera, which had no telephoto lens. They were pretty close!

Anna had an even closer encounter with wildlife. The group stayed at a lodge in the park. Breakfast was eaten outdoors on the veranda. They had been warned to watch out for monkeys, but, being from Missouri where monkeys are not common, they didn't know what that meant. All at once, Anna says, a monkey was eating the pineapple right off her plate!

One of the restaurants where they ate in South Africa had business cards from all over the world pinned to the walls. Everyone who visits – including President Clinton! – leaves a card. So Anna left her card there, along with the hundreds of others! Also in South Africa, the group sang at Alberton Methodist Church.

From South Africa, the group went to Maputo, in Mozambique, where the Mozambique Consultation III was being held. At the consultation, the choir sang to open the meeting. As a part of the consultation, they sang, youth choirs from all over Mozambique sang, then the Mozambican and Missouri youth sang together. Also they met the U.S. Ambassador to Mozambique, who talked to the group about the role of governments in helping developing nations around the world. From this encounter, Lindsay developed a dream of becoming an ambassador, so she can help make a difference in the world. She saw a lot of need on the trip and a lot about how the United States could help to make a difference. She wants to get into government to help.

As a part of the conference, each of the youth attended a workshop. Anna went to a women's workshop, where the topic was domestic violence. Alex attended a workshop on United Methodist Men. The men's big project was working on wells (*Editor's Note: this has been one of the projects where United Methodists in Missouri have invested a lot of resources, both financial and personal.)* The men commented that they very much appreciated the support from the churches of Missouri (and other parts of the world) but that they would like to have more direct

support from United Methodist Men in Missouri. They would enjoy the connections with groups similar to theirs. Lindsay's workshop was on communications. She reported that pastors don't communicate easily, because the infrastructure for communication that we take for granted is not available. They don't all have computers. They still use lithographs for printing at the central office. The Director of Communications is paid $75 a month, for a full-time position. This was a shock to Lindsay. She was paid $150 a month for a part-time job, back home in Liberty. She says, "as teens, we often think that if we give money, it won't do much, because we think we don't have all that much. But I made twice as much as a Mozambican pastor in a part-time job. So, whoa, I could really be helping!"

In Xai Xai, the group went to several different churches, each church representing, in turn, several communities. All of the churches held thanksgiving services, which lasted for several hours. Thanksgiving is usually held the first Sunday in August, but all the churches in the area of the Consultation postponed the celebration to coincide with the Consultation. This made it possible for the Missourians to attend and participate in the worship. Alex says that, in Zimpeto, each community represented sang a song. Then they each danced up with an offering. All of the churches did this. They compete to see which community gave the most. The community who gave the most got a special banner. The second and third places got lesser banners. They get to keep the banners until the event the next year. He says that, at the church they attended, there were about 12 people from Missouri, who gave about $20 each. That's a neat sum, but he says it didn't come close to what the communities gave. At the thanksgiving service Lindsay attended, they brought pews as a part of their offering.

In one of the churches the group attended, there was a new baby named for Bishop Ann Sherer. As a part of the service, the Bishop had the privilege of baptizing the baby. This made a deep impression on the youth about how the church holds together across the world and about baptism itself.

Visiting local churches made an impression. At one point, they were pressed for time and the bus wasn't working, so a group rode in the back of a truck to the churches and sang. The local people gave them coconuts as an expression of thanks! They came back with about 50 coconuts! Alex reports that, in one place, they drove up to the church and he was confused. Where was the church building? They were directed to a huge tree, with log benches around it. There were mud houses all around. There were 10-15 people waiting under the tree. Alex's comment was "it was so primitive, yet people came out to praise God."

The group sang in about 20 different churches around Xai Xai. In one church they were singing to the women who were preparing dinner for them (an informal, impromptu song). They were singing in Portugese, words they had learned carefully as a part of their preparation for the trip. The women listened, corrected the pronunciation of several of the words – and then they all sang the song together. The people in Mozambique, the youth said, sing many of the songs we do, except in Portugese. When the local people sang "Praise Ye the Lord," they stood up and sat down in the same places we do here in America.

On at least one occasion, the youth stayed in homes in the village – with local youth as their hosts. Anna said that their host was curious about AIDS in the U.S. He assumed that we have as many cases of AIDS as they do in Africa. (*Editor's note: in sub-Saharan Africa, about 29.4 million people are living with HIV or AIDS, according to UNAIDS, a United Nations body. Three and a half million people became infected in 2002, or 91,780 a day. Two and a half million people died in 2002.)* Anna said they talked late into the night, long after she and her roommate, both of them exhausted, wanted nothing more than to go to sleep. In the home where Lindsay stayed the girls in the home slept on the floor and gave Lindsay and Audrey their bed.

The last night the group was in Mozambique there was a party at Bishop Machado's house with Mozambican youth. Alex and Lindsay have a picture of Bishop Machado dancing with one of the local youth. Bishop Sherer also did her fair share of dancing, but there is no photographic evidence! Wasimbo, the biggest pop star in Mozambique was there, so all the

youth in town were watching the party from beyond the fence around the yard. Finally the bishop said it was time to go home, because there was school the next day! Groans about having to go to bed because of school are now known as part of the universal language of youth.

I asked the youth what words they would use to describe the church in Mozambique. Alex and Lindsay said "joyful," "thankful," "humble," and "overcrowded (delightfully full)". They also commented on how many homes had been destroyed in the war, how many land mines were everywhere in the country, and yet how the people seemed to be so joyful and thankful. Anna's comments were that they struggle with the same stuff we do. They wanted to know how we keep people active in the church. Anna asked them "how do you witness to people?" They said they had so little money there was nothing they could do except witness to what God had done in their lives, even though they had nothing.

Then I asked, what is the most important thing you learned on the trip? Anna said that she saw a lot of parallels with our society, like apartheid and civil rights. As a result of the trip, she now sees the world as "a smaller place in a bigger way." She now feels more connected to the whole world. Both Alex and Lindsay said the most important thing they learned was that they can make a difference.

We've already seen that the most memorable moment of the trip for Anna was the cathedral of *Regina Mundi* in Soweto. For Lindsay, the most memorable moment was AMCARE, because of the difference they are making. Alex said his most memorable moment was in Xai Xai, at night. The sky was so bright, all lit up by stars. They could see all the southern constellations, and it reminded him of the power of God.

Finally, I asked, how are you different because of the trip? Lindsay said "now I know what I want to be when I grow up." She also said (echoed by the others) that she has far more appreciation for things she takes for granted – clean water, regular electricity, and so on. She also has a new understanding of really how little you can live with in the world and be happy. Alex said he had more appreciation for God's work, because of people who have so little and yet are so

grateful for what they have. Anna says the difference for her is that she now pays more attention – to other people, to the news, to everything.

So what came of the trip for these youth? A heightened awareness of the world, of the common bonds of humanity, of how blessed we in America are with what we have, of how little some people have and still manage to be happy, of the power of witnessing, of crushing human need, and of how we (even youth) can make a major difference in the world.

Historical Notes of Interest

Missouri United Methodism has a history! Not only that, but we are beginning to have a *long* history. Beginning this year, and continuing for quite some time, there are important bicentennial and sesquicentennial events we will be celebrating – or at least noting. Some of them are listed here. The dates listed here all have to do with events significant for the life of the conference. We'd also be happy to list dates that are significant for local churches, as well. If your church is celebrating a bicentennial, sesquicentennial, or centennial in the next 3-4 years, please drop me a note, and we'll be happy to include that date as well. For now, the dates of significance for state-wide celebration are pretty awesome!

2003 In a surprise move, France offers to the American commissioners the entire territory of Louisiana, in 1803

2004 In 1804, the United States takes formal possession of Louisiana, in ceremonies at St. Louis, with Captain Amos Stoddard of the U.S. Army and Captain Meriweather Lewis representing the United States.

In 1854, Central College is founded in Fayette, Missouri.

2005 In 1805, Bishop Asbury appointed Joseph Oglesby to "Illinois," and suggested he spend his "spare time" checking our prospects for Methodism in Missouri. Oglesby crossed over to Missouri and reported to the conference of 1806 that there were 200 prospects for Methodism. This may have been the entire English-speaking population of Missouri at that time!

2006 In 1806, John Travis was appointed to Missouri. He arrived shortly after Lewis and Clark, along with the rest of the Corps of Discovery, arrived back in St. Louis and Zebulon Pike led an expedition to what is now Colorado. Travis organized two circuits, the Missourie (*sic)* and the Merrimack (*sic)*.

Sometime in the conference year of 1806-1807, the first camp meeting and the first Methodist Holy Communion were held in Missouri. This was in present-day St. Charles County, and Willliam McKendree, then the presiding elder of the Western District, assisted.

2008	Bishop William McKendree (who had been elected at the General Conference in the spring of 1808) attended two camp meetings in Missouri. This is first time a Methodist Bishop visited Missouri.
2016	In 1816, the first Missouri Conference was organized. It included a far greater geographical area than today's conference.

If You Want to Write for "Toward the Setting Sun"

There are three broad categories of material we want for this journal. The first is the serious research paper. In this issue, that is represented, to a degree, by Larry Williams' and Carol Kreamer's articles on Mozambique. They are serious research, based on first-hand experience and access to the primary sources, even though they are contemporary history. You may have a topic you're working on, or would like to work on. If so, email the editor at jogooch@aol.com and let him know what you're doing. If you would like suggestions for your research or some guidance on narrowing a topic, he can also help with that. If you'd like to write that kind of paper, but aren't sure about a topic, email the editor. We have a "wish list."

A second category is the first-hand experience article. In this issue, the articles by Bishop Sherer and the youth would fall into this category. In this category, we'd love to have a person, or persons, who were involved in "caravanning" back in the 1950s write their recollections of those days. We'd also love to have persons who participated in the traveling Vacation Bible Schools in more recent years write about their experiences.

The third category is the short notice about historical events. The section "Historical Notes of Interest," illustrates how this category would work. Here we would also include announcements about upcoming events of historical interest, such as Old McKendree Day, significant church anniversaries, and so on. Announcements about upcoming events would need to be in the hands of the editor by September 1 for the fall issue, and by March 1 for the spring issue.

Address questions, comments, and ideas for articles (as well as manuscripts) to

John O. Gooch, Editor
1756 Wynbrick Dr.
Liberty, MO. 64068
817-415-0480
jogooch@aol.com